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THE CASE FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY

A CANADIAN STUDY

By

RoHan Williams

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through Political Science
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2000

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Abstract

This thesis examines the concepts of direct democracy, which is defined as direct rule of the people, removing the necessity for elected representative. A review of the literature on the concepts shows that direct democracy enjoys broad appeal with writers such as Benjamin Barber, John Stewart Mill, Thomas Cronin and James Fishkin. Yet, it has been thought that direct democracy is not practical where the population, exceeds a few thousand, or is spread over a vast region. Other concerns have been expressed in the area of the ability of the average citizen to understand and render a judgement on complex issues.

Looking specifically at Canada's potential for overcoming the problems associated with direct democracy, two questions are considered. First, does the potential for direct democracy increase with a proportional increase in level of education of the electorate and the availability of the internet communications technology? Second, what difference might direct democracy make to the sagging levels of conventional political participation in Canada? The thesis addresses voter apathy, it looks at the connections between education and politics, as well as the connections between communications technology and politics. After examining if the conditions necessary to direct democracy in Canada exist, this work focuses on what Cronin refers to as the tools of democracy. Recall, referenda and initiative are the tools considered. British Columbia experience with recall and initiative is also considered.

The author concludes that the high level of education and the advent of internet communication in Canada make it possible and plausible to consider the implementation of a system of governance that provides a greater degree of direct democracy.

Dedication

To Dana

Because you believe in Τηε Ποωερ οφ ονε

To My Parents

And My sister

Cause you thought me patients

Acknowledgments

I wish to express a heart-felt gratitude to my advisors, Dr Amore, Professor Pawley and Dr. Romsa, who were all first readers. Your insight, guidance and most of all your patients made this challenging project delightful.

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Chapter One Introduction

As we move into the twenty-first century, it appears that representative democracy is the governing system of choice for western democracies. Now that representative democracy has triumphed over other ideologies, the debate has shifted. The question now is how democratic is representative democracy? Representative democracy has long been accepted as the practical end of the democratic spectrum, and ideally suited for governance of large and diverse nation-states. At the other end of the spectrum stands direct democracy. Direct democracy, though thought to be more reflective of the people's will, is argued to be impractical for governance in any country larger than the city-state (Held 1996). This work will examine the virtues of direct democracy in an attempt to determine if increased levels of education and developments in communications technology make a greater degree of direct democracy a viable option for the Canadian people.

Direct democracy is impractical in that people are expected to play both roles, governor and governed. Contemporary and ancient theorists alike found this to be problematic. These theorists and the issues they raised are covered in the next chapter. The problem is immediately evident, when we consider the size of the modern states. The task of getting all the citizens to consider an issue and render a decision would be a challenge for even the smallest nation in the modern state system. Representative democracy on the other hand, affords the state a sense of collective decision making while avoiding the problems of logistics that cripple direct democracy. Representative democracy is rule of the people through a series of institutions that may vary in size and complexity from region to region. Citizens, instead of deciding on the issues, decide on

representatives who comprise the institutions and are trusted to make the decision of state.

Barber sees representative democracy as a system that does not provide a forum for mass participation (outside of elections) but also as a system that actively discourages participation.

It is not surprising that liberals, who regard political community as an instrument rather than an intrinsic good, should hold the idea of participation in disdain. The aim is not to share in the power or be a part of the community but to contain power and community and judge them by how they affect freedom and private interest (Barber 1984, 7).

Barber notes that the basis of representative democracy is a set of beliefs that are liberal in their scope, but are not fundamentally democratic (Barber 1984). Therein lies the dilemma. How can a democracy that lacks the fundamentals be employed to protect the democracy of a state? Barber states:

Liberal democracy is based on premises about human nature, knowledge, and politics that are genuinely liberal but are not intrinsically democratic. Its conception of the individual and of individual interest undermines the democratic practice upon which both individual and their interest depend.

As an option to the ills of representative democracy, Barber offers what he calls strong democracy. Strong democracy is addressed in detail in Chapter Two.

Canada is considered a representative democracy with a two-tiered parliamentary government. As is the case with most representative democracies, participation in the process of governing for the majority of Canadian citizens is limited to the act of voting for a representative. The Canadian electorate votes for representatives at three levels of government: the municipal, the provincial and the federal. The federal government maintains responsibility for the nation as a whole. It is responsible for international issues. The provincial government is responsible for regional, provincial and territorial

issues; and the municipal government is responsible for local, city and county issues. The division of powers among the three levels is complex. An important question is where does Canada fall on the democratic spectrum. The focus of this study is exclusively on the federal and provincial levels of government.

There have been two recent occasions that indicate a very noteworthy feature of the Canadian political system. In 1974 and 1980, elections resulting from a vote of no confidence in the federal government yielded two different, notably opposite results. The election of 1974 saw the government returned to power while in 1980 the Prime Minister was forced to resign because the party had lost its majority. The election itself is not what is of concern but the process that brought it about. In both instances the snap elections were the result of a no confidence vote by the Parliament. The vote of no confidence is one of five conventions that together make up the principles of responsible government. The notion of responsible government is a feature of representative parliamentary democracy. "In the British and Canadian regime, responsible government makes the executive accountable to the House of Commons" (Malcomson & Myers 1996,60).

The five conventions are as follows: One, the prime minister is empowered to appoint ministers from members of parliament. This allows for accountability and manageability. The Prime Minister will have an easier time with like-minded people, for whom the leader will accept accountability, in the cabinet. The ability to select the cabinet ensures this. The second convention serves to limit the scope in the selection of the ministers to the cabinet; it states that members of parliament selected must have a majority support in the house. The third convention relinquishes the power of the prime

minister to the advice of the ministers; it states that the prime minister will act only on the advice of the ministers. The fourth convention mandates collective responsibility; it states that all ministers will bare culpability for policies made by any member of the government. The fifth convention, noted above, is that loss of confidence in the government by the house will result in either the resignation of the government or the calling of an election. This notion of responsible government would seem to make the government accountable to the legislature and not the electorate.

This view is taken by Malcomson and Myers in their book The Canadian Regime; “In a regime based on the principle of responsible government, the people’s role in selecting a government is merely an indirect one” (Malcomson & Myers 1996, 64). They go on to indicate a fundamental flaw in the merits of the Canadian system. The question being raised is, is the Canadian government of or by the people. The notions of it being for the people only comes into play because the fundamental principle of government, most kind of government is that it is for the people, at least in principle. Malcomson and Myers state:

The principle of responsible government is flatly inconsistent with the notion of a directly elected executive. We have seen that the core idea that the government must be accountable to the House of Commons. Having the people elect the government directly would necessarily make the government accountable to the people as well. As the old proverb teaches, however, no one can serve two masters because the two masters may demand contradictory things ... In responsible government, then, we do not directly elect our government. It is more accurate to speak of the “formation” of a government (Malcomson & Myers 1996, 64).

If the Canadian government is in place to serve the interest of the house then how can the Canadian government be referred to as democratic? A democratic government exists to serve the people (Held 1996). The government may however, qualify as being democratic if we consider the fact that the House of Commons is constituted of

representatives who in theory serve the interest of the people who elect them. In so doing, the government, by serving the representatives in the House of Commons, is in effect serving the people.

Democracy is rule by the people. The elected representative has a duty to reflect the will of the people. Failure to do so would mean that representative democracy would be democracy in name only. In actuality, it would be closer to what Aristotle referred to as an oligarchy. An oligarchy is in place when the power of the state resides exclusively in the hands of a social class (usually the upper class). Aristotle argued that an oligarchy is preferable to democracy; he saw democracy as having the potential to be chaotic (Aristotle 1984, 183. ed. Lord). Modern representative democracy looks very much like Aristotle's oligarchy, "rule of the rich who are few in their own interest" (Aristotle 1984, 278. ed. Lord). Added to the question of where, does Canada lie on the democratic spectrum, is the question, how do the recent developments in technology and a significant increase in the levels of the average education the last five years influence the democratic process? Increase in levels of average education and developments in communications technology are elsewhere being employed as arguments for permitting a greater degree of direct democracy (Blais & Dobrzynska 1998).

This work limits its focus to both federal and provincial levels of governments unless otherwise specified. An assumption is made that academic levels have remained fairly constant. In other words, that the level of political preparation a student received in grade eight in 1960 is assumed to be equal to the level of political preparation received in grade eight today. As well, this work will not provide the answers to the questions of implementation regarding a system that provides a greater degree of direct democracy. It

will not address who or what entity will frame referenda questions. This study does not make value judgements on outcomes of referenda. It is concerned solely with the ability of citizens to participate.

The Setting

Canadians have since World War II, turned out in relatively high numbers as voters in both federal and provincial elections; the average turnout is 67 percent of the registered voters (Statistics Canada 2000). Increasingly however, Canadians seem dissatisfied with the present system of government (see figure3-1). Patrick Boyer, former Member of Parliament, identifies this as a problem. Boyer seeks to have the citizenry play more than a token role in the direction of the country (Boyer 1993, 64). This, in a time when it seems the government has abdicated its role as the government of the people. Increasingly the Canadian government is reducing the services and protection it offers to its citizens. There have been significant cutbacks in essential social services, health care and education to name a couple. Cutbacks that do not have the support of the people are undemocratic.

There have been a series of government decisions that have favoured big business. The issues surrounding the drug patents, deregulation and hands off policy in the airline industry are indicators of the government's declining role in the governance the state. Bill C-91, increasing the patent protection for pharmaceutical companies, was catapulted through the legislature with very little debate and no public consultation. Any action on the part of the government that is clearly contrary to the wishes of the majority

of the nation's people is undemocratic. The limitation or lack of a debate on legislation in the parliament is also undemocratic. Campbell & Pal state:

Bill C-91 ... more or less ignored by the media and commentators enjoyed a relatively easy ride through the legislative process. This process was marked by another Canadian political first: as far as anyone knows this was the first time a Canadian government had limited debate each stage of the legislative process -- from the second reading in the House of Commons to the third reading in the Senate (Campbell & Pal 1994, 28).

This excerpt indicates much more than the government giving up its powers and the sovereignty of Canada to the market forces. Also clear was a uniquely undemocratic component of parliamentary model of representative democracy. Campbell and Pal argue:

This case illustrates numerous features of the real world of Canadian politics. First, it illustrates that in a parliamentary system of the Westminster type, a government can -- if it wants to -- use its majority to pass legislation briskly and forcefully, no matter how controversial the legislation (Campbell & Pal 1994, 28).

Deregulation of the airline industry and the government's lack of action in the face of the demise of Canadian Airline was also a case of the government abdicating their role, again letting market forces legislate. When pressured to act by the cries of Canadians, the government adopted a hands off policy. Campbell and Pal quote Ariel Redway:

Pity the poor Minister of Transport. If he lets American Airlines buy an investment in Canadian Airlines International, he will be accused of allowing foreigners to get control of our skies ... and putting Air Canada in jeopardy.

On the other hand, if he does not let American buy an interest in Canadian, and encourages a merger of Canadian and Air Canada, he will be accused of creating job losses at Canadian and eliminating competition. Then if either Air Canada or Canadian should ask for financial help, he will be accused of subsidizing business and encouraging inefficiency (Campbell & Pal 1994, 85)

This, added to the exclusionary attempt at constitutional reform of Meech Lake, an attempt at constitutional reform on the part of the government without consultation of the people, sent ripples through the Canadian society. Everywhere people were asking for greater involvement in the affairs of the state. "The failure of Meech seemed to deliver

the message that the people at large would no longer tolerate being excluded from deliberation over their own constitution” (Johnston *et al* 1996,51). In response, the government proposed the Charlottetown Accord.

This thesis, it is hoped, will shed light on the possibilities for greater participation on the part of the citizens in Canada’s political future. In the face of traditional governments giving way to the seemingly uncontrollable steamroller, the market, people must reclaim their sovereign right to self-determination. Representative government in Canada no longer represents the interest of the people it alleges to serve. It is time for the people to use the skills available to them through education, and the tools available through technological innovation for their political fulfilment.

This thesis hopes to answer two questions. One, does the potential for direct democracy increase with a proportional increase, first in the level of education of the electorate, second, in the availability of specific forms of communications technology? It is argued in Chapter Three that levels of education have always been a factor in political participation. It was not until noblemen became educated that they became the oligarchy, and it was not until education came to the masses that they became the electorate. Education, not necessarily in the formal contemporary sense, but in a greater knowledge of their social and political existence has definitely been a mobilizing force. Communications technology has had a similar history of influence on western politics. Technology has brought the politician closer and closer to the electorate. Chapter Three discusses how technology has brought the political process and the officials themselves under greater scrutiny.

Second, what difference will direct democracy make to the levels of participation in Canadian politics? The premise of direct democracy is based on the notion that the citizen is equipped with the knowledge or the means to acquire the knowledge on which to make a rational decision. In Chapter Three, participation is examined. The obvious problem is that with no true democracy having documented numbers in the levels of participation; the determination will be at best an assumption, based on arguing that the lack of participation that is presently exhibited in Canada's representative democracy is a result of the system itself and has less to do with the individual. Chapter Three highlights the incongruence of asking citizens to relinquish their right to rule, while at the same time asking them to make a token contribution which facilitates a facade of democracy.

The Methods of Study

This section will provide a layout for the procedures followed in this study. First, the research method employed will be outlined and the strength and weakness of this design and its suitability to this study will be explored. Second, the variables of the study will be identified and described. Then data will be presented indicating the increase in levels of education across Canada, and the application of tools of direct democracy in British Columbia will be discussed.

The method to be employed is the case study. The method of study is determined by the nature of this project. This project is case study of representative democracy, with a focus on Canada's parliamentary system; it will be seeking to explore the relationship between education levels and the ability for political participation, further it will examine if greater educational achievements contribute to a greater desire to participate in politics.

The fact that this study is contextually based within a specific region makes the case study the ideal research design. Johnson and Joslyn state:

The case study is an empirical inquiry that (1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when (2) the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident; and in which (3) multiple sources of evidence are used. (Johnson & Joslyn 1995, 143)

In a case study “the researcher is neither able to assign subjects or cases to experimental or control groups nor to manipulate the independent variable. Furthermore the researcher does not control the context or environment as in the case of a laboratory experiment”(Johnson & Joslyn 1995,144). Louise White argues that a case study is “a method for learning about a complex instances, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instances taken as a whole and in its context” (White 1994, 128).

The nature of the study to be undertaken will fulfil the criteria by being exploratory and revelatory. This project will examine a contemporary phenomenon, political participation, in its natural context, as it is affected by independent variables education and communications technology, over which the researcher exercises no physical controls. White states that taken as a whole a case study can be used to study:

“Individuals; a specific location, such as a city; an institution, such as the U.S. State Department; a particular historical entity, such as a presidential administration; an event, such as the Persian Gulf war of 1991. ... The choice of a case design means that the researcher is interested in the unit as a whole, in gaining a full understanding of many facets of the case (White 1994,129).

Johnson and Joslyn argue that there are three problems associated with studying contemporary events. First, “the researcher may be the only one to record the certain behaviour or phenomena” (Johnson & Joslyn 1995, 147). The weaknesses of this design as indicated will be overcome by components of this study; secondary sources are

employed extensively in this study, which relieves concerns expressed, by Johnson and Joslyn. The components of this study, people's abilities, technological development, and the desire to participate have been well documented by sources independent of this project. This ensures that this research can be duplicated, qualifying this as scientific research. Where primary sources are employed, the data collected also comes from sources independent of this project, and for interviews every attempt was made to verify the data collected.

A second criticism of this research design notes that one cannot generalize from a single case study. This study accepts that limitation, as it seeks to address conditions unique to Canada. This however, does not limit the use of the findings of this study as a reference or a guide in a similar study of another region. Further Johnson and Joslyn note, in response to the notion that case studies are not generalizable, that "case studies like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (Johnson & Joslyn 1995, 147).

The third criticism refers to a lengthy research period that produces a massive incoherent document. "This criticism confuses the case study with particular methods of data collection such as participant observation ... furthermore evidence collected in a case study can be presented succinctly – even if long reports have been the rule" (Johnson & Joslyn 1995, 147). Johnson and Joslyn make a very good defence of the case study as a legitimate research tool.

The case study is without doubt the best-suited research tool for this undertaking. It allows a concise study of the important points while allowing for a detailed analysis of the variables and the interaction among them. Variables in this project are the

phenomena that facilitate the explanation of political behaviour. This project as mentioned seeks to measure whether, and to what degree an increase in levels of education accompanied by developments in communication technology create a climate for increased citizen participation in the decision making process of the state. The project seeks to determine if an increase in levels of education and advancements in communications technology have a causal effect on political participation. Further, does this participation, if present, indicate a need for modification of the political process that will allow for greater participation of citizens.

The dependent variable is the potential for citizen participation, i.e., direct democracy in Canada. The independent variables, on the other hand, are education and communications technology. Figure 1-1 indicates the relationship among the variables. The independent variables, in the centre are affected by intervening variables to the right and countervailing variables to the left. The result is either an increase or decrease in the dependent variable. Countervailing variables are factors that detract from the process; they are anomalies that will negatively influence the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Negative influence refers to the results being contrary to the hypotheses expectations. Intervening variables are on the other hand, factors that lend themselves to the process in a beneficial manner. It should be noted that both countervailing and intervening variables derive their status from the researcher's goals and objectives.

The countervailing variables occur in two forms: those that directly affect the citizen and those that affect the process. Apathy, technological ineptness and time constraints are countervailing variables that directly affect the citizen. They are

characteristics of the citizens. The countervailing variables of the process are cost, security, and drafting confusion (questions). Intervening variables depicting characteristics of the citizens are enlightened citizens, greater deliberation and political activism. Intervening variables specific to the process are access to information, decline in government services and increased influence of lobby groups.

Data Collection, Processing and Analysis

Statistical data used in this project comes from internet sources. Data on levels of education in Canada comes from the national statistical agency, Statistics Canada. Data on the numbers of plebiscites held in Canada comes from Democracy in Canada, a work by Patrick Boyer. Data on the results of recall and initiatives in the Province of British Columbia is extracted from the elections British Columbia web site.

The Structure

Chapter Two reviews literature on the issues surrounding democracy. Chapter Three analyses the literature to determine the current environment. Chapter Three also looks at developments in communications technology and the impact that such developments have had on the application of politics over time. Further in Chapter Three Education and its impact on the political process is examined. Chapter Four will conclude with a synthesis of current technological capabilities for participatory democracy with the increasing levels of education in an attempt to determine the plausibility of the hypothesis.

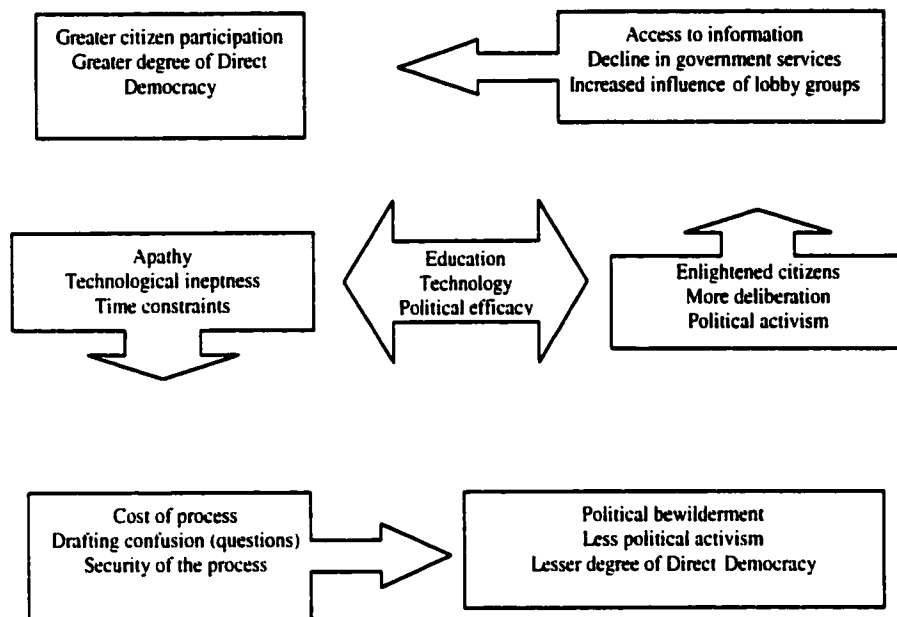


Fig 1-1 Shows the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables

Chapter Two Literature Review

This literature review will be divided into three sections. The first section will address the popular notions associated with democracy's two main foundations. It will begin by outlining the origins of and purpose of government. This will be followed by a brief description of democracy and its origins. Then finally, arguments in favour and against both representative and direct democracy will be reviewed. The second section will look at developments in communications technology namely: newspaper, radio, television and the internet, with particular focus on their impacts on the political process. The third section will look at the Canadian experience with democracy, as well as the relationship between technology and politics within Canada.

In order to understand the political appeal of democracy as a system of government, it is necessary to grasp the role and importance of government. This can only be done by examining the origins of governments. Noteworthy philosophers such as Hobbes and Rousseau have hypothesised on the origins of government. According to Rousseau, human's first desire is that of self-preservation. It is the desire to protect oneself that leads one to join others in a society.

Men in the state of nature are arrived at that crisis when the strength of each individual is insufficient to overcome the resistance of the obstacles to his preservation. This primitive state can therefore subsist no longer; and the human race perishes unless it changed its manner of life. (Rousseau 1947, 14)

Rousseau refers to what he called the Social Contract. This envisions a society where people give up their individual rights for the good of the community, each person being equal within the community. "Each of us places in common his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will; and as one body we all receive each

member as an indivisible part of the whole” (Rousseau 1947, 15). The general will here is equated with the contemporary notions of popular action of the state further definable as majority rule.

Hobbes on the other hand refers to the origin of government in much the same light, a stark difference being that he sees the crisis in the state of nature as a war. Hobbes’ starting point is also that humans are equal.

The consequence of natural equality is an equal hope in each man to attain his ends. Since desire in any man is in principle unlimited ... and since all men have equal hopes to attain their ends, whenever two men happen to desire the same thing that they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies. In their competition to satisfy their desires, they endeavour to destroy or subdue each other. (Hobbes, 1766 95)

For Hobbes, the emergence of civil society comes from a desire to end the conflict among people in their natural state; the difference from Rousseau being that humans don’t determine their destiny collectively, they concede that right to a single individual who will act on their behalf. In Hobbes’ example humans emerge from the state of nature into a society that will be governed by a chosen representative. Goldsmith identifies the relationship between the people in the Hobbesian society and their leader as.

The social contract may be distinguished in two types: the pact of association, and the pact of government. The pact of government is a pact between the prince and the people. The people transfer power to the prince and the prince in return promises to rule justly (Goldsmith, 1966 140-141).

It should be noted that this relationship according to Hobbes deteriorates into an authoritarian regime (discussed later).

The important point to note is that in either case the emergence of civil society was made possible through the development of government, be it collective or authoritarian. The objectives of government are based on the conditions of its emergence.

A fundamental principle necessitates that government provide for and ensure a peaceful and productive coexistence among humans.

Political Governments come in distinct forms. There are varying degrees of these three distinct forms: namely authoritarian, oligarchy and democracy. An authoritarian government is one in which the unquestionable power of the state is vested in the hands of either a single individual or a council of individuals. It offers no avenue for impute on the part of the people. In fact, it employs coercion to attain and maintain conformity. The ruler has the sole responsibility for addressing and administering the needs of the society. The entire population is subjugated. Mill refers to the ruler in an authoritarian regime as a despot:

He might even surround himself with a council or councils of government, freely chosen by the whole or some portion of the nation; retaining in his own hands the power of taxation, and supreme legislative as well as executive authority. (Mill 1991, 242)

Robert MacIvor describes political government as a centrally organised system that facilitates order within a community whether large or small (MacIvor 1965, 17).

Further Mill identifies three conditions of government:

The people for whom the government is intended must be willing to accept it; or at least not so unwilling, as to oppose an insurmountable obstacle to its establishment. They must be willing and able to do what is necessary to keep it standing. And they must be willing to and able to do what it requires of them to enable it to fulfil its purpose (Mill 1991, 207)

An oligarchy places the responsibility of government on an elite body. This body would ideally have members that are from a particular social class. Though greater numbers are involved, the decision making process would still be discriminatory. The majority of the population would still have no real impact on the shape of the society. An

oligarchy despite, more accurately because of, its exclusion was the government of choice for Aristotle.

But is it better for the one who is most excellent of all to rule? But this is still more oligarchic, as more are deprived of prerogatives. One might perhaps assert, however, that it is bad for the authoritative element generally to be man instead of law, at any rate if he has the passion that results [from being human] in his soul. But if the law may be oligarchic or democratic, what difference will it make (Aristotle 1984, 100)

Oligarchies are merely an authoritarian government with a broader base.

Held re-visits the Athenians for a pure definition of democracy. Democracy from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule) literally translated means rule of the people (Held 1996, 4). This definition of democracy does not accurately describe the manifestations of democracy in today's societies that claim to be democratic. Becker agrees wholeheartedly in his work Modern Democracies. Becker defines democracy as:

A democratic government has always meant one in which the citizens or a sufficient number of them to represent more or less effectively the common will, freely act from time to time, and according to established forms, to appoint or recall the magistrates and to enact or revoke the laws by which the community is governed (Becker 1941, 7).

The difference between Held's description and Becker's description of democracy lays in the notion of a representative acting on behalf of some number of the citizens within the state. There in lies the fundamental difference between the two manifestations of democracy, namely direct democracy and representative democracy. Direct democracy developed in Athens was, according to Held, the original form of democracy (Held 1993, 15).

Democracy, simply put by Gutmann, is based on a presumption that people in a society must have a means of decision making that address the concerns of all within the society (Gutmann 1993, 411). As stated in the introduction democracy has

been spreading in the latter half of the twentieth century, implying a tremendous desirability. Democracy derives its desirability from being the form of government that gives the most autonomy to the most people. When compared to an authoritarian regime, democracy, as described here, clearly affords the individual greater liberties and means for self-determination. In the contemporary international system, claiming to be democratic adds an air of legitimacy to the respective governments. Ideally governments derive legitimacy through public acknowledgment and acceptance of the its right to wield power. The legitimacy of a democratic government is then automatic, as all people are obliged to acknowledge and accept a government of which he or she is a member.

Popularly thought to be the only true exhibition of direct democracy, the direct democracy of Athens and direct democracy comes under assault from MacIvor. MacIvor states that as a form of government, democracy is extremely difficult to identify, he stated, "it is never completely achieved" (MacIvor 1966, 132). MacIvor points to the Athenian democracy as being anti-democratic for lack of observation of the basic principles of democracy the notion of equality of all. Athens reserved the right to participate in the democratic process for citizens of Athens.

The citizen's role was jealously guarded and only the sons of free Athenians were admitted. The out lying population of Attica, for the most part illiterate, could hardly leave the soil and take on duties or exercise the rights of citizens, Resident aliens were debarred from citizenship. And below them were the slaves, constituting more than a third of the population, who had no rights what so ever. As for women they were still kept - all except the high class *hetairai* or courtesans - in a kind of Oriental seclusion. ... While this situation prevailed the principle of democracy could never find its true expression or its true justification (MacIvor 1966, 134).

It would be difficult in light of the evidence to dispute MacIvor's position on the issue of democracy having actually existed. The fact that it excluded many of the people within

the protection of its confines is testimony to its non-existence. That said, for those that were permitted to participate, limited and exclusive as it might have been, Athenian democracy provided for rule by the people. Thus, Athenian (direct) democracy is still a valuable example of democracy.

Held, in his work *Models of Democracy*, points to the virtues of direct democracy. He identifies the success of the early Greek polis as being directly due to the model of democracy that they employed in the mid-sixth century (Held 1996). Held identifies democracy as being due to a continuous evolution. He notes specifically that there was a growing sense of identity and advancement in literacy.

Political changes took place within geographically and socially demarcated communities of a few thousand people living closely together either within one urban centre or within the surrounding countryside. In these communities, communication was relatively easy, news travelled quickly and the impact of particular social and economic arrangements was fairly immediate. Questions of political culpability and responsibility were almost unavoidable, and the kinds of obstacle to the political participation posed by large, complex societies were not yet significant (Held 1996, 15).

For Held, a unique set of circumstances, not least of which was education, combined to create the right climate for the development of direct democracy. Mill agrees that conditions within a society will have an influence in the type of government that governs. It only does so however, insofar as conditions within society generally influence human behaviour. This is because, for Mill, governments are by their very nature a product of human will.

Let us remember, then, in the first place, that political institutions (however the proposition may be at times ignored) are the work of men; owe their origin and their whole existence to human will. ... In every stage of their existence they are made what they are by human voluntary agency (Mill 1991, 207).

If, as Mill states, governments are products of human agency, then the construction of the Athenian democracy closely mirrors Rousseau's Social Contract.

Rousseau notes that humans in the state of nature were all equal before extraneous forces intervened and caused changes.

Men naturally are, by common consent, as equal among themselves as were the animals of each species before various causes introduced into certain species the varieties that we observe (Phillip translating Rousseau 1994, 15).

The notion that all are equal fosters a respect for rights and opinions of another. This respect is necessary for direct democracy to exist. It is very clear in Held's *Models of Democracy* that there was a notion of equality among the citizens of the Athens.

The development of democracy in Athens has formed a central source of inspiration for modern political thought. Its political ideals – equality among citizens, liberty, respect for the law and justice – have influenced the political thinking in the West (Held 1996, 15).

Critics of the polis have levelled their criticism on the very notion identified here as fundamental to the existence of direct democracy. Aristotle thought very little of democracy as it was practised in the polis. Aristotle believed, as do many contemporary thinkers, that humans are not equal. He believed that humans are not equal in their abilities and are therefore not equal in their importance to the society. Aristotle placed a great value on pedigree, wealth and education. It must be noted here that education, as Aristotle saw it, was not available to people that fell outside a certain social class, i.e. pedigree and education were very strongly tied together and in many instances were co-signifiers of affluence. For Aristotle matters of the state should not be left to the masses. As he believed that the majority of the population were poor, policies made by a government of poor people would spite the rich and affluent (Aristotle 1984 183). Aristotle believed very strongly that democracy was a tool for the masses to dispossess the wealthy. He argued that democracies were doomed to end up in revolutions because of this.

Now democracies undergo revolution particularly on account of the wanton behaviour of the popular leaders. On the one hand, by harassing individually those owning property they get them to combine (for common fears brings together even the worse enemies); on the other hand, they egg on the multitude publicly [against them] ... In Heracleia ... on account of popular leaders: notables were treated unjustly by them and went into exile, but in exile gathered together and returned to overthrow [the rule of] the people ... The democracy in Megara was also overthrown in a similar way (Lord ed. Aristotle 1984, 155).

This is a very honest and fundamental fear that rings true in contemporary society. John Stewart Mill, Edmund Burke, James Madison and others have echoed similar sentiments; they advocate a democracy in which a privileged class manages the reigns of society.

Democracy, which is constructed on a faulty model, the highly cultivated members of the community, except such of them as are willing to sacrifice own opinions and modes of judgment, and become the servile mouthpiece of their inferiors in knowledge, seldom even offer themselves for Congress or the State Legislatures (Mill 1991, 113).

Though the fears expressed by Aristotle, might apply to the prosperous representative democracies of today. The upper crust of society have none the less dawned the mantle of leadership, thereby removing the role of the popular leader referred to by Aristotle. Mill re-enforces the role of the leader in the representative democracy as one in which the representative should be left to deliberate and come to a decision without the popular impute from the constituents.

The rich and affluent fear being dispossessed by the poor; the poor, it is argued, would have all the power in a direct democracy. People that held this belief are people that would stand to lose a lot if the masses were to reform the distribution of wealth; e.g., the framers of the American constitution were landed gentlemen. This fear has been expressed as tyranny of the majority. Tyranny of the majority presents an image of an

angry mob violating the rights of a virtuous minority. Barber, in his support for the virtues of direct democracy expressed similar sentiments.

The distrust of democracy is in fact as old as political thought itself. Philosophers have always approached popular rule with suspicion, preferring to link justice to reason and harmony in the abstract. The Greeks paid democracy no compliments when they associated it with disorder of the rabble (oligarchy). Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, and later Cicero and Machiavelli all admitted the demos into government as at best one element in a mixed constitution and at worst as a source of faction and anarchy to be controlled and repressed at all cost.

The bias persisted into the modern political era when, with the rise of actual democratic regimes, it found its way into doctrines of the separation of powers, of checks and balances, and of limited government. Madison's The Federalist number 51 threw the full force of this distrust into the American constitutional thinking. (Barber 1984, 94)

Tyranny of the majority appears in most criticism of direct democracy. The credentials of the vast numbers of academics and politician who have written on the subject have legitimised the fear. Contemporary theorists such as Schumpeter and Arterton have justified fears of a tyrannical majority that would take advantage of society's weak and make whimsical decisions that lack deliberation. The argument here would seem to want to label representative democracy as an evil of itself. Representative democracy for all the ills in its perceived conception has been the best option for the features of the modern state. During the period that Madison, Mill and Burke wrote, ignorance was the commodity in greatest supply among the majority of the citizens.

Direct democracy as practiced in Switzerland has avoided the problems of tyranny that Madison feared. If ever there were a region ripe for the ills of tyranny of the majority, it would be Switzerland. Switzerland is a country of just over 7.1 million people with significant ethnic differences. The potential for one or more of the dominant groups to dominate the others is ever present. The Swiss population is broken down

ethnically by languages and religion. The argument here would be that what the Swiss have is a semi-direct democracy.

This little country has worked out a system of government which in certain respects combines the stability of the American system with the responsibility of the French and British systems. It is a government, moreover, under which the principles of direct democracy are extensively applied (Chase, Valeur, Buell 1935, 558).

Switzerland is a representative democracy which frequently consults its people on matters of the state by using referenda.

Switzerland relies so frequently on the device that it has held nearly as many national referendums as all other democracies combined. ... Constitutional changes require a double majority to gain approval (Penniman 1983, 18).

The Swiss model was not acceptable to other nations because it was thought that their larger the geographic or population size were not conducive to that degree of direct democracy. Nations to the west, considerably larger and with different concerns, looked to a different system.

Representative democracy offered the best solution to the dilemmas; the size of the modern states and the ability of the citizenry were forces forbidding direct democracy. Mill, like Madison and Burke, saw a role for the people, one he hoped would improve their value incrementally to society. In justifying the importance of representative democracy, Mill made mention of the importance of participation in even the smallest capacity.

The only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social states, is one in which the whole people participate; that any participation, even in the smallest public function, is useful; that the participation should everywhere be as great as the general degree of improvement of the community will allow; and that nothing less can be ultimately desirable, than the admission of all to a share in the sovereign power of the state. But since all cannot, in a community exceeding a small town participate personally in any but some very minor proportions of the public business, it follows that the ideal type of a perfect government must be representative (Mill ed. Grey 1991, 256).

The success of representative democracy in modern states is a testimony to the fact that it works. Why then are there so many making a bid for states to make the change to direct democracy? Despite the benefits of representative democracy, there are a few problems.

Hurst, a very harsh critic of representative democracy, argues that representative democracy is not democratic. He cites a contradiction between representative democratic doctrine and contemporary governmental practice (Hurst 1990, 25). Hurst attacks the notion that people through their representatives vote on issues.

The first of these contradictions is the most important and that is, that it identifies a decision-procedure for selecting political personnel with one for selecting policies of laws. In choosing one, the people chose the other (Hurst 1990, 25).

For Hurst, the legislature and government make laws and decisions. He notes that though the people have a tool to make periodic changes (elections). During the tenure, there is no way to ensure compliance with the people's wishes. In his second contradiction, Hurst goes on to question the legitimacy of the laws created, and the institutions that create them

The doctrine assumes that what the legislature does is pass general laws and that the executive is no more than an impartial agency of enforcement of those laws. ... The notion of the rule of law supposes laws to have received genuine democratic assent to apply to all citizens ... Actually most legislation consist in delegating powers of decision and action to executive agencies, that have derived the power to make such rule as necessary and administration an activity as they see fit within some broad statement of objectives (Hurst 1990, 26).

Hurst is noting here that the legislative is the body empowered by the people. He sees the legislature delegation of authority to other bodies of appointed officials as detraction from democracy. Hurst makes another observation of representative governments: the legislature should have the power to make the laws while the government has an administrative role. The government also sponsors bills that would be

voted on in the legislature. Hurst states that the party system, a very popular feature of contemporary democracies, makes for a reversal of the roles of the legislature and the government.

Party rule means government direction of the legislature ... The legislature typically carries through a governmentally sponsored legislative programme extending the specific powers of action of the government. ... The actuality of continuing government and party government thus reverses the position of legislature and executive (Hurst 1990, 26).

The third contradiction levelled by Hurst, raises questions surrounding the manner in which representatives are elected, the single member plurality system. This system is criticised because of the way the winner is decided. The winner in a region needs only to have the most votes, not necessarily a majority. "It means that a party may receive, say, 5 per cent of the votes nationally and receive no seats" (Hurst 1990, 27). The single member plurality voting system is the system of choice for Canada. This third criticism levelled by Hurst begs the question: is representative democracy representative? Subsequently, whatever claim representative democracy held for being democratic by virtue of being representative is lost. Despite the contradictions within the system of representative democracy, it has become the accepted form and has tremendous hold over the democratic governments of the day. The success of representative democracy can be explained through examining its virtues. Representative democracy, adopted as a response to the desire for democracy, has garnered its virtues from the perceived weaknesses of direct democracy.

Representative democracy has managed to acquire the confidence of those in favour of democracy for a few reasons. The reasons are derived from the association of representative democracy with the notions of democracy. As Hurst, Mill and R MacIvor

have stated earlier these are not the same. Representative democracy however, has gained acceptance, and is now synonymous with democracy. According to Mill, the best form of government is a complete and popular government:

The ideal and best form of government, it is scarcely necessary to say, does not mean one which is practicable or eligible in all states of civilization, but the one which, in the circumstances in which it is practicable and eligible, is attained with the greatest amount of beneficial consequences, immediate and prospective. A complete and popular government is the only polity which can make out any claim to this character. ... Its superiority in reference to present well-being rest upon two principles, of as universal truth and applicability as any general propositions that can be laid down on human affairs. The first is, that the rights and interest of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able and habitually disposed to stand up for them. The second is, that the general prosperity attains a greater height, and is more widely diffused, in proportion to the amount and variety of the personal energies enlisted in promoting it (Mill 1882, 64).

For Mill there are conditions of government that can only be filled if the people are allowed to play a part. Mill believes that each person knows best what their needs are, and by that virtue are best suited to decide how best to meet them. In an earlier citation Mill stated, the only government that satisfies the demands of the state is one in which all people have the opportunity to participate. He further notes that representative is the only democracy that affords this privilege. Then, finally, he suggests, in light of the fact that the means for all to be heard was not attainable except in a small state, representative democracy would have to be the ideal form of government.

According to Schumpeter, government approved by the people replaces government by the people because of the practicality of it. Schumpeter, like Mill sees the size of modern nations as a rational for what he refers to as government approved by the people (Schumpeter 1950). Schumpeter inadvertently identifies another perceived strength of representative democracy by pointing to a weakness of democracy. Schumpeter, talks about the problems associated with making a collective decision,

namely: crowd factor and the time factor, due to the sheer number of decisions to be deliberated. In theorising on the human condition, Schumpeter concludes that, when asked to make a collective decision, humans tend to display “a reduced sense of responsibility, a lower level of energy of thought and greater sensitiveness to non-logical influences” (Schumpeter 1950, 246). Schumpeter is careful to note that this phenomenon can be evidenced in representative bodies.

Schumpeter seriously questions the ability of the average citizen to make political decisions. Representative democracy is able to overcome this problem through the fact that only the best and brightest will be at the helm.

The typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyses in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interest. He becomes primitive again. His thinking becomes associative and affective (Schumpeter 1950, 262).

Schumpeter also sees the notion of the representatives being responsible to the ideals of the people as problematic. He believes that people unfit to rule are unfit to direct a representative. In support of this position, he advances a new definition of representative democracy.

Suppose we reverse the roles of these two elements and make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding. ... And we define: the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote (Schumpeter 1950, 269)

Finally, Schumpeter makes mention of apathy on the part of the average citizen.

Citizen apathy, closely related to inability, is evidenced in this next quote:

In the other case, he has not taken the trouble to qualify; he does not care to absorb the information or to apply to it the canons of criticism he knows so well how to handle; and he is impatient of long or complicated argument. All of this goes to show that without the initiative that comes from immediate responsibility, ignorance will persist in the face of masses of information

however complete and correct. It persist even in the face of meritorious efforts that are being made to go beyond presenting information and to teach the use of it by means of lectures, classes, discussion groups. Results are not zero. But they are small. People cannot be carried up the ladder (Schumpeter 1950, 262).

Representative democracy overcomes some problems that would be critical for direct democracy. By having suitably trained representatives in the role of government the citizen, inept in the political matters, is relieved of the burdensome concerns of the state. This next section examines the system in which the representatives operate. A brief history of Canadian Democracy along with brief look at arguments in support of direct democracy will be presented.

Democracy in Canada

Canadian democracy was a direct adaptation of the British parliamentary system, with a few modifications more suited to the considerably more vast terrain.

Canadians borrowed the blueprint for their parliament from Britain, but adopted it to their circumstances. ... In 1867, Canada joined the world of states as a representative democracy (Jackson & Jackson 1999, 153).

The Canadian system of government is composed of three separate but connected bodies: the House of Commons, the Senate and the Crown. In Canada, a Governor General carries out the role of the Crown, the duties being: to provide royal assent at the final stage transforming a Bill into Law; to dissolve parliament when an election is to be called; to appoint the prime minister. The House of Commons is an elected body that is responsible to the people. It is from this body that the executive is selected. In theory, the executive should be voted into the cabinet constituting the prime minister and the ministers. In actuality, the leader of the winning party becomes prime minister and selects the cabinet from the members of the winning party to the legislature (Jackson & Jackson 1999).

The Senate is made up of appointees, appointed by the prime minister. It was originally believed that the Senate would provide the voice of reasoned wisdom. The role of the Senate has come under fire in contemporary Canadian politics. According to Jackson and Jackson, the two main reasons for creating the Senate are no longer valid.

The first was that the founders believed that "men of wisdom and good stock" would be among the best qualified to watch out for the public interest. The second was that such a body would protect provincial rights. ... The allotment of senators provided the less populous provinces a degree of regional influence in parliament (Jackson & Jackson 1999, 153)

Contemporary misgivings toward the Senate may also have much to do with the functionality of the Senate. The fact that Canada has had an inordinate number of liberal governments, the Senate is stocked with liberal appointees. This forces many to question the reasoned wisdom. The nature of the Canadian political system is such that parties play a significant role.

Parties are the pillars of the Canadian political system. White, Wagenberg and Nelson describe the political party as "an organization devoted to occupying the offices that constitute the institutions of government"(White *et al* 1995, 220). Wiseman elaborates on the functionality of political parties:

In Canada ... they emerged with the growth of representative and popular government, and they are a central feature of the political system, serving as transmission belts that help to convert public opinion into public policy and vice versa. Parties mobilize voters around issues, offer policy alternatives, and as governing instruments lead to direct the bureaucratic machinery of the state transforming philosophical disposition and policy pronouncements into concrete programs (Whittington & Williams ed. 1995, 221)

In a representative system, political parties provide one of many avenues for the average citizen to participate in the political process. Party support ranges from voting for the party at elections through volunteering and to membership in the party.

The manner in which the parties have changed since the loosely knitted coalitions of the late eighteenth century can be linked with the rise in the level of education. "In the old days a parliamentary caucus anointed one of its own, the leadership selection process today has been stretched much closer to the outer limits of what the democratic principles might entail" (Whittington & Williams 1995, 223). Whittington and Williams credit the changes in the leadership selection process to the influence of the neighbours to the south, making only a glancing mention of education as a factor.

The modern party exhibits features of the cadre and mass party principles. Cadre refers to a small tightly knitted organization; the leader is the focal point that represents the group to outsiders. It is a top down structure with the leader determining the direction. Cadre parties employ 'spin-doctors' to run campaigns and manipulate public opinion. Mass parties on the other hand consist of a wide membership that in theory directs the leader, effectively making the leader the mouthpiece of the party. Whittington and Williams point to the fact that parties exhibit mass party principles as an indication of being democratic. They added, however, that this mass party principle does not extend itself to the 'bottom-up' approach to party politics, which would truly indicate democratic principles on the part of the party. The Canadian party system is a microcosm of the political system at large, evident in the next section that looks at the state of Canadian democracy.

The state of Canadian democracy is a hotly debated issue across Canada. The issues that spark the debate might differ, but the question is the same: is the government securing the interest of the people it is elected to serve? Historically, Canada has rarely

sought input from the people. Canada's political elite have displayed a nonchalant disregard for the opinion of the people outside of the election process (Boyer 1992, 9).

There have traditionally been four tools of direct democracy employed within representative democratic systems: they are referendum, plebiscite, recall and initiative. Referendum and plebiscite have been the most popular and the most employed in Canada and elsewhere. A referendum is an instant whereby the citizens of a region are asked to vote on an issue. A plebiscite functions in a very similar manner with one major exception. Plebiscites are held to be non-binding while referenda should be for all intents binding. This has not always been the case. There have been many referenda that have been non-binding, being in effect plebiscites.

Referenda have had a long and undistinguished history in Canada. Referenda in Canada were provided for as early as 1878 when the government of the day had enacted the Temperance Act (Boyer 1992, 17). The Temperance Act made it possible for decisions on prohibition, regarding 'intoxicating liquor', to be made by the community affected. A staggering thirty-four plebiscites have been held on issues regarding alcohol (Boyer 1992).

Nationally there have been three referenda in Canada's history, the most recent of which, the Charlottetown Accord, ignited a renewed debate on the role of the citizen in the process of their governance. The Charlottetown Accord was billed as a measure that would have brought the most good to the most citizens. As mentioned earlier the Charlottetown Accord was the third of three well-spaced referenda in Canada. In actuality, the Charlottetown Accord was a plebiscite. Like its predecessors of 1898 and 1942, results were binding. The Charlottetown Accord was a response to the defeat of the

Meech Lake Accord (Jeffery 1993, 55). Both were attempts at constitutional reform. The Meech Lake accord, an exercise in executive federalism, angered the Canadian electorate (Johnston *et al* 1996, 45).

In anticipation of a referendum on the constitutional amendments, the federal government had drafted and passed Bill C-81. Bill C-81 allowed the government to conduct a nationwide referendum on any question it chose (Johnston *et al* 1996). The drafting process was highly undemocratic, the government opened the process to include aboriginals to the orchestrators that had been involved in the Meech Lake process (Jeffery 1993, 50 & 69). In aiming to satisfy all, the Charlottetown Accord did not satisfy any. Provisions were made to address: Quebec's issues; a transfer of powers from the federal government to the provinces; economic union that is the elimination of inter-provincial trade barriers; aboriginal self-government; limitations on the federal spending power; Senate reform; aboriginal rights and the charter.

Jeffery argues, as Cronin did earlier, that referenda are better suited to responses requiring a yes or no answer. He points to the hopelessness of referenda through a look at the results of the previous two attempts.

When, in 1898, Sir Wilfrid Laurier referred the question of prohibition to the country in a referendum, the result was inconclusive. A scant 51% of Canadians approved the proposal, while his home province of Quebec overwhelmingly rejected it. The legitimacy of the result was further complicated by the fact that fewer than 40% of eligible voters participated. ... Laurier dropped it.

The conscription crisis of 1942 led Prime Minister King to hold a national vote in order to proceed with the draft, despite an earlier election promise not to do so. While the question received the support of 65% of voters, it was rejected by a massive margin (71%) in Quebec. King's decision to proceed anyway led to heightened English – French antagonism and Quebec resentment that persisted for decades (Jeffery 1993 95-96).

Jeffery also notes that referenda can be skewed by the wording of the questions asked. Even with the best intent, the length of a question, according to Jeffery, could influence the way the electorate would react to it. A long question might frustrate the electorate. While a short question might over simplify the issue. Both could affect voter turnout and affect the vote of those who turnout.

Canada's commitment to the use of referenda or plebiscites is evident in the fact that each time an attempt is made to consult the people, a special statute has to be enacted to allow one or the other to be held. Only in 1992, did legislation for referenda receive royal assent. Prince Edward Island, however, has the distinction of being the first province to hold a referendum; it was on prohibition and was held in 1878. The laws of the province provide for the use of referenda. The most recent enactment of the provision was in 1988, at which time the province voted on whether to have a fixed link to the mainland; the Confederation Bridge was opened in 1998. Newfoundland had referenda on whether or not to join confederation, and joined in 1949. Provisions for referenda are built into the many Newfoundland statutes.

A virtual landslide of new legislations rewriting the provisions for referenda swept Canada in the early 1990's. In July 1990, British Columbia enacted the Referendum Act. Saskatchewan's Referendum Act came into effect in 1991. In July 1992, Alberta's Referendum Act became law. Quebec has a Referendum Act enacted in June 1992 allows the government to consult the people on any bill adopted by the national assembly. Manitoba does not have a formal Referendum Act, though there are provisions for province wide consultation of the people. These are the Local Authorities elections Act, the Municipal Act, the Municipal Board Act, the Public Utilities Board

Act, the Liquor Control Act, and the Lord's Day Act. Ontario has no formal provisions for referenda or plebiscites at the provincial level. Its three referenda, the most recent being in 1921, had special legislation enacted to facilitate the votes. In New Brunswick, the provisions for referenda are embedded in the elections act. There are however, provisions for referenda at the municipal level. The Northwest Territories has a Plebiscite Act first enacted in December 1981. The Yukon Territory has a Plebiscite Act that allows for consultation on any matter. Canada's newest territory, Nunavut, has no provisions for referenda.

The use of referendum has varied at the provincial and territorial level with as many as eleven in British Columbia, to zero in the Yukon Territories and Nunavut. According to Boyer, there have been many thousands of referenda held at the municipal level across the country. This is in keeping with the common notions associated with the viability of referenda. The wider the coverage of the government body, the less likely it will be that tools of direct democracy will be employed. When applied at the national level the referenda in Canada have actually been plebiscites, meaning, as stated before, the results were not enforceable.

Recall is a process by which the electorate are permitted to remove an elected official from office (Cronin 1989). An initiative permits voters to propose amendments to existing legislation (Cronin 1989). Both initiative and recall require that people secure a determined amount of support, evidenced in signatures, to ensure their success (Cronin 1989). These tools of direct democracy are fixtures in many regions of the United States. In Canada, however, only one province, British Columbia, employs recall and initiative. The Recall and Initiative Act received Royal Assent in British Columbia in July of 1994,

and was brought into force in February of 1995. Referenda on the other hand have a nominal use in all provinces and one of the three territories; there also have been three national efforts. A listing of referenda is available in Appendix A.

The recall process is initiated by the citizen. In British Columbia, the Chief Electoral Officer supervises the regulations for the process.

To initiate a recall petition a citizen would apply to the Chief Electoral officer, upon receipt of a completed application the Officer notifies the target Member of the legislative assembly (MLA). The petitioner is then required to follow regulatory procedures in the collection of a predetermined number signatures of voters registered at the time the MLA was elected. If successful in obtaining the required signatures under the specified conditions the MLA is obligated to leave office and a By-election is called. Failure to meet the conditions at any point of the process on the part of the petitioner results in the cancelling of the petition (www.elections.bc.ca/rcf/rcfpam.html).

The process involved in a citizen-advanced initiative is similar. Any registered voter has the right to propose a new law, he or she is also entitled to launch a petition to generate support of new or challenge existing laws (www.elections.bc.ca/rcf/rcfpam.html).

British Columbia has a very high signature demand; 40 percent of the registered voters must sign a petition for recall of a MLA to be enacted (www.elections.bc.ca/rcf/rcfpam.html). Of the American states that employ recall, three states require as little as 15 percent; 40 percent in one state; and 25 percent in seven states – representing a mean (Cronin 1996). Critics of the process have maintained that recall places too much power in the hands of the electorate. Recalls are expensive and upset the flow of politicking, undermining the independence perceived to be necessary for the elected representative to function. Cronin provides a case for and against recall.

- 1) The recall provides for continuous accountability, so that voters need not wait until the next election to rid themselves of an incompetent, dishonest, unresponsive, or irresponsible public official.
- 2) The recall helps to check undue influences by narrow special interests.

- 3) The recall enables jurisdictions to permit their officials to serve longer terms.
- 4) The recall gives the average person a reason to stay informed about civic developments between elections.
- 5) Recall offers a safety-valve mechanism for intense feelings.
- 6) Recall provides a sensible alternative to impeachment.

Opponents of recall have advanced the following arguments

- 1) The very premise of the recall is antagonistic to republican principles, especially to the idea of electing good lawmakers and officials and then allowing them a chance to govern until the next election.
- 2) Recall makes public office less attractive to the most able individuals.
- 3) Recall elections are divisive, disruptive, polarizing, and subject to a myriad of abuse intentional and unintended consequences.
- 4) Recall elections are confusing, often unfair and place too much burden on the voters to keep informed between elections.
- 5) Recall elections are costly, unnecessary and directed against the wrong targets (Cronin 1996, 133-9)

The arguments for and against recall are applicable to the Canadian situation and will be analysed in Chapter Three. In the relatively short period, since recall has been implemented in British Columbia there have been eleven recall attempts: three in 1997, seven in 1998 and one in 1999. All but one failed, with the one in question resulting in the MLA tendering his resignation (www.election.bc.ca/rcf/rcfpam.html). Of the unsuccessful attempts five were withdrawn and five failed.

The most recent initiative petition was approved on March 23, 2000. Prior to this, four petitions were received, three were issued and failed because they were either not returned to the Chief Electoral Officer or returned without the required signatures (www.elections.bc.ca/newsrel/n_000323.html). To understand the initiative process this work will follow the projected life of the most recent initiative attempt.

Victoria - An application for an initiative that would replace waiting lists for social and health-care services for children with a 30 day processing period has been given approval in principle by Chief Electoral Officer Robert Patterson.

The petition, entitled the Initiative to Establish the Child Services Equality Act, will be issued to the proponent for signature collection on May 23, 2000. Proponents will have 90 days to collect the signatures of at least 10 per cent of voters in each electoral district who were registered on or before the day the petition is issued.

Anyone who intends to spend money to oppose the petition must register with the Chief Electoral Officer by April 25, 2000. Third party advertisers supporting or opposing the petition must also register with the Chief Electoral Officer.

Signed petition sheets are verified by Elections BC to ensure that the people who signed a petition were entitled to do so, and that the signatures on a petition match the signatures on file for those voters. If that verification process shows enough valid signatures have been collected in each electoral district, and the financing requirements have been met by the petition proponent, the Chief Electoral Officer sends a copy of the initiative petition and the draft Bill to the Legislature.

A Select Standing Committee must meet within 30 days of receiving the signed initiative petition and draft Bill, and has 90 days within which to recommend introduction of the Bill or refer it to an initiative vote, which is held the last Saturday of September every three years. If an initiative vote is required, it will be held September 28, 2002.

If more than 50 per cent of the total number of the registered voters in the Province and more than 50 per cent of the total number of registered voters in at least two-thirds of the electoral districts in the Province vote in favour of the initiative, the Chief Electoral Officer must declare the initiative vote to be successful, and the government must introduce the Bill at the earliest practicable opportunity.

Once the Bill is introduced in the Legislature, the requirements of the Recall and Initiative Act will have been satisfied, and any subsequent reading, amendment or passage of the Bill will proceed as with any other Bill (www.election.bc.ca/newsrel/n_000323.html).

The attitude toward the tools of direct democracy is that it is incompatible with the system of representative democracy (Boyer 1992, 16). It is to this end that recall and initiative is still only a fixture in one of the thirteen major regions in Canada. Referendum has fared better; it has been employed by all but two of the thirteen regions in Canada. Referenda have been employed when the government has been unsure of popular opinion, or been afraid of the wrath of the electorate that would be theirs for support on either side of an issue, this while all the time contending that most issues were too complex for the voter.

Direct democracy also evokes at least two other images, both unflattering to the voter. Sometimes voters seem like curmudgeons, unwilling to countenance change even when the status quo is no longer sustainable. The mirror image is voters as dupes, too easily led even to the point of voting for dictatorships. If the "curmudgeon" and "dupe" images differ in relation to the status quo, they converge in raising the question of competence (Johnston *et al* 1996 9).

Johnston *et al* question the ability of the electorate to grasp matters of the state. The example of the Canadian national referendum of 1992 is drawn into the fore: were Canadians merely curmudgeons when they voted to maintain the status quo? Referenda result in a mathematical majority producing only an opinion (Cronin 1989). Johnston *et al* argue that the referenda, like opinion polls, have little moral status. Referenda are seen to lack the deliberative component that makes them acceptable. However, the same argument can be made of representative democracy.

In parliamentary democracy with strong party, such deliberation as occurs is likely to be on camera, within parties. The exchanges between parties are designed not to minimize differences but usually to magnify them. When differences are minimized, it is not the end result of open deliberation but as the product of tacit bargain. Commonly, the tacit bargain reflects the desire of all parties to attract a certain bloc of votes, as each party seeks to build a coalition of minorities. If the appeal of this strategy testifies the weakness or the absence of "natural" majorities, the symbolism is appalling: representatives claim the right to decide on behalf of the whole because only they have the opportunity for true deliberation. But instead of truly deliberating they merely bargain. Parties' very silence on certain questions naturally makes observers – voters – wonder if the real agenda is not hidden (Johnston *et al* 1996 16).

Johnston *et al* argue that the claims of deliberation and logic made by representative democracy are false and are at best dubious. They, however, are not beating down the door to direct democracy as they point out that the problem of competence among the electorate is a very real one.

The issue of competence is tackled and questions are raised, on the importance of knowledge as a condition for consent.

Scholarly record on political knowledge and sophistication confirms that competence is indeed problematic, that many citizens know next to nothing about the political order, and that the portion who can reproduce the barest semblance of intellectually consistent policy reasoning is small. But some people surely know more than others, and knowledge may not be a necessary for consistent collective choices (Johnston *et al* 1996 16).

Johnston *et al* looks at the evidence of voter apathy that directly lends itself to the preserved incompetence, and concludes in agreement with Barber and Pateman that the present system offers so little incentives for participation that people would rather not (Johnston, Blais, Gidengil & Nevitte 1996). Sartori argues that participation on the part of the average citizen should not be a concern. He expresses that any participation would be a disservice to the political system.

Arguments that the apathy might be due to illiteracy, poverty of insufficient information have been shown by events to be false, as has the suggestion that it might be due to lack of practice in democracy. We have learned that one does not learn to vote by voting. ... we can only really understand and take an active interest in, matters of which we have personal experience, or ideas that we can formulate for ourselves, neither of which is possible for the average person where politics is concerned (Pateman 1970, 11).

Pateman captures the sentiments of many elites. This is the same sentiment that has nurtured representative democracy since its conception.

Downs provides an economic theory that again justifies representative democracy as the safe haven for democracy. He looks at the deliberation process as one of cost and reward; he identifies that the cost associated with acquiring information is necessary for making a decision. Downs states, there are three necessary conditions to arriving at a rational decision.

To make rational decisions, a man must know (1) what his goals are, (2) what alternative ways of reaching these goals are open to him, and (3) the probable consequences of choosing each alternative. ... Because of division of labor most citizens in modern democracies do not gather for themselves the information they need for political decision making. ... Decision-making is a process which consumes time and other scarce resources; hence economy must be practiced in determining how many resources shall be employed in it. ... The marginal cost is the opportunity cost of acquiring this bit of information. Much of this cost can be shifted from the decision maker to others, but the time for assimilation is a non-transferrable cost. The decision maker continues to acquire information until the marginal return equals the marginal cost to him (Downs 1957, 208-219).

The opportunity cost of collecting information necessary for decision-making differs from person to person and might give, according to Downs, an insight to voter apathy. If the

opportunity cost outweighs the benefits, then a rational being would not invest scarce resources in the acquisition of the information, thereby withdrawing themselves from the process all-together.

Downs has a further rationale; the number of voters in contemporary society is so large that for the decision of one voter to influence the process is an unlikely prospect. This further reduces the incentive to participate. The return on the investment of acquiring, processing, and acting upon the information would be zero to the citizen who supported a candidate that was defeated. This is an obvious indictment on the citizen in representative democracy. It also begs the question, would the citizen in direct democracy not be subject to the same disincentive? If they were, the ramifications for the conditions of the state would be dire.

Budge envisions a direct democracy that employs the institutions involved in representative democracy. Budge sees a place for the tools of direct democracy, referenda, recalls and initiatives. He added that there would be a very important role for political parties in states governed by direct democracy. For Budge, political parties would be responsible for the administration associated with presenting issues to the public at large. In this respect, the parties would perform much like they do under representative system.

The same task of organizing the agenda and ensuring minimal policy coherence will be performed by parties – possibly with little change between a parliamentary and popular setting, as they increasingly have to perform the latter anyway, under today's conditions. One can indeed envisage a type of direct democracy in which there is a party based government, chosen by elections. This government would put important bills and other political decisions to popular votes, just as it does with legislative votes under representative democracy (Budge 1996, 41)

Budge later suggests there would be no difference between this and forms of representative democracy that exist elsewhere (Budge 1996, 44). In actuality, this is the system of government that exist in Canada. The obvious exception on the degree and regularity to which the views of the people sought and decisions adhered to.

Barber offers what he refers to as strong democracy. Strong democracy closely resembles the popular notions associated with ancient Greek theory of democracy. Barber looks at the issue implementing direct democracy. Barber states; "it also shares much with its cousin liberal democracy, and in practical terms it is sometimes complementary to rather than a radical alternative to the liberal argument" (Barber 1984, 118). Barber sees representative democracy, which he refers to as liberal democratic pluralism, as a "hotel cleaner" of private interest"(Barber 1996, 118). Further, in an almost Marxist revile of Capitalist values, Barber noted that history provides evidence of what happens to democracies that are unresponsive to the communities they are in place to serve.

For Barber, strong democracy differs from the classical democracy of the Greeks in that it does not see politics as a way of life. The distinction places politics in the realm of being a tool, while the Greek notion portrayed humans as political animals, making politics as necessary to existence as air.

The theory of strong democracy does not quite envision politics in the ancient sense of a 'way of life,' and it is explicitly hostile to the still more extravagant claim that politics is *the way life*. ... The theory of strong democracy ... envisions politics as not a way of life but a way of living – as, namely, the way human beings with variable but malleable natures and with competing but overlapping interests can contrive to live together communally not only in their mutual advantage but also to the advantage of their mutuality (Barber 1996, 118).

Democracy does not occur naturally but is a product of human's endeavours. Strong democracy does not only seek the common good but also an individual fulfilment.

Communications Technology and the political process

Politics, like society in general, has been a beneficiary of communications technology. Communications technology has enabled the messages of politicians to get to the electorate faster, further and more directly. It has also provided the citizen with critical commentary on policies and practices. Communications technology in the twentieth century has allowed for the creation of media. Media has had a tremendous effect on the political process. Much of the influence of communications technology on politics is manifested in the relationship between media and politics.

The newspaper, the oldest form of popular communication technology, still delivers a political message. The newspaper has traditionally served two purposes: it informs citizens and brings them closer to the political process. The newspaper's weakness as a tool for political communication is that it only provides an interpretation of speeches or events and that it provides the news in some instances a day or more after the event has occurred. In most instances in the society of developed nations, the delay is usually a day, although well-timed events can be delivered in the same day delivery. Historically print technology has had a tremendous impact on the world. Printed material brought literacy to the masses, it influenced the way society reared its children, it facilitated the codification of law allowing for the development of precedent, it made possible the growth of science, and enabled the separations of church and state (Eisenstein 1968).

Today the newspaper is one form of the media that serves the population in democracies and non-democracies alike. The press enjoys a very special place in the world of media. The press is the only media that is recognised in the United States constitution (Grossman 1996). The notion of freedom of the press is very closely associated with the notions of freedom of speech, a basic right protected under democracy. In democratic societies, the press has a tremendous responsibility for informing people about the issues of the day; the media with little or no effort contextualizes current events making comparisons to the past and projections for the future (Grossman 1996). Governments and critics of the governments have used the newspaper as a means of mobilizing the people. The newspaper brought the mass rallies, debates, torchlight parades, bonfires, and political forums that moved from community to community generating support for a candidate beyond the communities in which they were held. Newspapers became very influential as Theodore White noticed in 1972, "it sets the agenda for public discussion and his sweeping power is unrestrained by any law." Chain ownership has taken away the diversity in the modern newspaper, increasingly today's newspapers represent a particular ideological position. This concern was addressed in Canada with reports of the Kent Commission.

The Kent commission made several recommendations on rules of ownership, concentration of ownership, editorial freedom and quality of journalism.

Rules of ownership: newspaper ownership would be limited to five daily newspapers; the circulation controlled by any one owner would not exceed five percent of total circulation of all newspapers in Canada; if multiple newspapers were owned by any single owner, these would need to be at least five hundred kilometres apart.

Concentration of ownership: the Kent commission introduced the concept of divestment, i.e., a reduction of existing levels of concentration. Specific recommendation for divestiture to break up what the commission considered to be monopolies were introduced for publishers in the provinces of New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland where concentration of ownership was especially prominent

Editorial Freedom: the commission's central concerns that those who owned newspapers too often interfered in the affairs of the newsroom. ... In the situation of chain ownership, the editor-in-chief would be obliged to submit an annual report on the question of editorial independence. ... an Editorial Advisory Committee ... would review the annual report by the editor; second it would itself report annually to a National Press Rights Panel.

Quality of Journalism: deliberations focused on what was often found to be characteristic of large conglomerate ownership – the overriding interest in profitability. ... The royal commission recommended that where newspapers assumed an initiative to spend more than the industry average on editorial expenses, tax credits should be offered to that newspaper as an incentive (Romanow & Soderlund 1996, 104-106).

These measures have done little to reduce the problems within the Canadian newspaper industry. Concentration and editorial freedom are still at the level they were when the study was conducted. Today newspapers while still very influential in the politics have lost ground to the emergence of other forms of media.

Radio and television in Canada have been given a mandate to preserve the national identity (Romanow & Soderlund 1996). Radio has been broadcasting in Canada since the early 1900's. Unlike our neighbours to the south, the Canadian government kept hands on, maintaining ownership of broadcasting institutions (Romanow & Soderlund 1996). Radio and television has had, and is still having, a tremendous impact on politics. They brought politics still closer to the people. Radio enabled the political message to be delivered to the illiterate. Television also contributed in this regard, bringing more people to the political process.

Both radio and television have the power to deliver live coverage of political events. The ability to cover events live provides the electorate with presents and an unfiltered information. Television surpasses both radio and newspaper in its ability to

deliver the news. The power of staging that allows a politician to speak directly to every person viewing as though he is talking only to him or her is lost on radio and virtually nonexistent in the newspaper. As stated for newspapers, radio and television have the potential to set the agenda.

The print and broadcast media, especially television, have an important influence on the agenda for public debate and on how Canadians perceive politics. Issues that gain the attention of major news media become those issues that are defined as political by the general public and political elites. Moreover, the media have considerable influence on the nature of political discourse, the context in which political matters are understood and the standards by which they are judged (Everett & Fletcher 1995).

Media has the power of selection of messages to be broadcast. Seemingly, there is an endless amount of material that could be transmitted to the public. Selection works to, as mentioned, set the agenda. Setting the agenda amounts to telling the electorate what to think about. Selection also succeeds in telling the electorate how to consider the material they receive (Romanow & Soderlund 1996). Everett and Fletcher argue that media will at times have a result averse to the desire being propagated in the media. For example:

In an era of increasing distrust of large organizations, it is important to remember that the media filter and amplify political ideas that they select from an array of sources but that they rarely originate them. The limits of the media were clearly revealed in the 1992 referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. A majority of Canadian voters was apparently unimpressed by the by the massive advertising blitz of the Yes side and unmoved by endorsements of the deal from members of the political elite, including the countries major editorial writers and columnist. ... From a political communications perspective, the case of the referendum is a useful reminder that, while the mass media occupy a central place in the political process, their influence is neither uniform nor wholly predictable. It varies by region and issues, among other factors, and is constrained by many other influences (Everett & Fletcher 1996, 31).

Evidenced by the passage is the indisputable power of the media to focus attention on an issue. However, the manner in which the public responds to the stimuli expended by the media is subjected to the influences of other variables. As mentioned in the quote, distrust of large organizations, disillusionment with the government of the day, impact the

resolution of the issue. There are any number of variables that might influence a decision. Everett and Fletcher are saying that it is difficult if not impossible to gauge what may impact the decision of individuals on an issue. At best, we make educated guesses, much like the meteorologist in their forecast. The latest development in the area of communications technology has itself inspired much forecasting.

The internet, a broadcast, two way communications medium, promises to totally revolutionize the way people communicate with each other. The internet has the ability to deliver all forms of communications media that preceded it. It delivers an electronic newspaper, it delivers radio, it delivers television and it delivers the telephone. The truly remarkable characteristic of the internet is not that it allows, like radio and television, many people to be informed simultaneously about the same issue, it is the fact that, via the internet people are able to provide instant feedback. The internet is able to facilitate, as a town hall never could, a huge discussion on issues. It is nowhere near its full potential but the applications for the democratic process, as a result of this characteristic, seem limitless. All the proponents have since the very early stages been identifying the potential for politics generally and democracy in particular.

Arterton states,

The dominant stream of thought on this problem among scholars and practitioners of American politics is one of worry, worry that the social change spurred on by these "hi-tech" developments will create a whole new problems for our political and governmental institutions. One need entertain only briefly the massive changes allegedly wrought by television in order to grasp the potential in yet another set of unforeseen consequences" spilling out from communications media into politics (Arterton 1987, 14).

The gloom in Arterton's statement is not exclusive to the scholars, resident neighbours to the south. Similar sentiments are quite well embedded in Canada. Heather MacIvor in an

assessment of the tele-voting system employed in the leadership selection in the 1992 Nova Scotia Liberal Party expressed a concern with the application of technology. H. MacIvor identified three problems with the exercise.

First, the party had to rely on television to broadcast the candidates' speeches, so party members at home could see them. ... The event lacked the drama of a traditional delegated convention and there was not much for the reporters to talk about. ... The second problem was the technology: the computer system was overwhelmed by the number of calls and it shut down. ... There were also concerns about security of the computer and telephone system. The CBC scanners picked up a cell-phone call to MT&T which appeared to report the number of votes for each candidate. In fact, the numbers were the totals of people trying to vote for each candidate, not the actual vote totals. ... Equally as damaging, a party member claimed he had brought and voted hundreds of PINs himself, using a list of phony names and address (H. MacIvor 1996, 15)

H. MacIvor also identifies what she refers to as a "paradox of technology and its relationship to technology" (MacIvor 1996, 15). MacIvor sees the decline in voter turnout as a result of the move to universal member voting (UMV) generally and the use of communications technology in particular.

H. MacIvor stabs at the heart of the application of new technologies when she joins Tenner in support of his "revenge effect" hypothesis. H. MacIvor argues that new technologies often have the opposite effect. The example H. MacIvor gives is that of the expectation of a paperless office, touted to be a result of the advent of computers. The reality according to H. MacIvor, is that there is more paper being circulated in the office because of the way individuals interact to the machines (MacIvor 1996).

H. MacIvor's indignation toward the prospects for new technologies and its potential impact on the political process is echoed by Arterton in his assessment of the undelivered promises of television. Arterton argues, the advent of television brought with

it a similar hype associated with the advent of the internet. Arterton points to the fact that television did not deliver on its promise to political communications.

Television promised a revolution of information for citizens; a freer, vital, robust political discourse. The idea of televised debates among candidates must, alone have held forth great promise for educating voters as to the choices they faced. Further communications would bring more understanding across social groups lessening political tensions and cleavages. Instead of informed debate, we got campaign commercials. Rather than emphasizing their proposals or preferred policies, candidates now stage "media events" that project favorable images of their characters. In the place of great diversity and vigor in the points of view available to citizens, television networks provide a bland and almost identical diet of news. Where the electronic media might deepen and enrich our political lives, analysis of the response of broadcasters demonstrates reluctance to cover politics as news and begrudging compliance with requirements for public affairs programming. In spite of the direct link between politicians and the voters, many citizens remain profoundly ignorant of even the most rudimentary political information. Rather than a marked jump in participatory politics, the last twenty years have witnessed a disturbing decline in voter participation (Arterton 1987, 16).

Grossman also cautions against exuberant expectations, pointing to the fact that not only did television not deliver, neither did radio, telephone or newspaper. For Grossman, experience and history is not just a reason for cautious reservation, but to the wise they would also say do not expect much (Grossman 1995). Grossman provides an alternate look at the explosion of media. The increase in the outlets of media should have provided more diverse programming; instead, it resulted, according to Grossman, in "creative decline" (Grossman 1995, 167). This also lends itself to H. MacIvor's notion of the revenge effect. It would however, be erroneous to say that media did not have an influence on the political process.

Where Arterton identifies that changes have occurred, he identifies them as undesirable ones.

The television age has ushered in a series of changes in our politics system that have been largely undesirable. Change was so gradual that much of the impact was not observed along the way. ... political parties have deteriorated and candidates have developed a considerable independence in fundraising

and support building. ... Networks are alleged to give greater attention to organizations that claim to represent the public interest as opposed to traditional interest groups that mediate the self-interest of their members. Instead of actively engaging in political discussions with other citizens, television viewers receive their political information passively and individually, isolated in their living room and without capacity for talking back or questioning the source (Arterton 1987, 17).

Further Arterton expresses grave scepticism regarding a future that allows communications technology a license to dictate the political process.

Now we face a second, and perhaps more radical, transformation in telecommunications media. ... The use of cable television by candidates for office, for example could reformulate the nature of electoral appeals and coalition building. Interest groups and political action committees might seize the new media as a means for enhancing still further their influence on policy. The capacity to communicate more readily with other citizens who share the same interest might result in strong groups that transcend geographical boundaries, thereby straining even further political institutions that are rooted in Geography (Arterton 1987, 17).

Arterton sees the forces of globalisation as being a direct threat to the autonomy of nations. He sees communications technology as a Trojan horse insidiously spreading a desire for participation within nations.

Participation has been a recurring theme in this review of literature. It has been addressed as it has been related to various areas discussed so far. Participation will now be reviewed directly. Laudon made an observation that "apathy, cynicism, and political withdrawal increase as literacy and access to education become more widespread" (Laudon 1977, 27). This idea is contrary to the beliefs of most proponents of participatory democracy have long contended that education is the driving force behind the political enfranchisement of the citizenry. Laudon is however not disputing that, in theory, increased levels of education should have lead to an increase in political participation. He is saying that in actuality, increased levels of education have led to a degree of frustration with the political process.

While mass media has helped reduce traditional barriers to political participation such as literacy, education, and widespread dissemination of political information, it has not, at the same time, contributed new structured opportunities for participation. The result is a heightening sense of relative alienation: never before have so many been informed and aware of political issues, yet so relatively constrained by the nineteenth century institutions and techniques of political participation. ... Instead of providing the average person with new tools and techniques of influence over surrounding institutions commensurate with person's heightened abilities, modern information technology comes to serve those very institutions as social control instruments which disseminate proper modes of etiquette, dress demeanor and speech. ... Citizens more educated and informed than ever before in history feel less capable of influencing decisions of the elected official. Officials better advised and educated than their predecessors still find themselves unable to galvanize public opinion in support of their policies (Laudon 1977, 28).

Where education provides citizens with the tools to participate, the restrictive nature of the political process limits participation, resulting frustration for the citizen. This frustration is manifested in the increasing degree of voter apathy that accompanies and negates the increasing levels of education.

The media has come to re-enforce this apathy on the part of the voter. Its selective portrayal of political figures is what is seen by the public. The problem as identified by Grossman, Everett & Fletcher and many others, is in the ownership of media. Everett and Fletcher note, "in Canada mass media ownership has been increasingly concentrated under the ownership of fewer, larger corporations" (Everett & Fletcher 1996, 36). Grossman sites an American example: "most of what America sees and hears on television and in the newspapers and news magazines every day already come under the control of a few large global companies" (Grossman 1995, 175). Concentration of ownership detracts from the diversity of the news product in two ways. First as eluded earlier, 'creative decline' by Grossman and second manipulation of content is easier.

This manipulation reduces the tools available to citizens wanting to participate in the political process. Knowledgeable citizens seeking to be informed are left without all

the facts necessary to make an informed decision. This notion begs the question, what are the characteristics of the knowledgeable citizen? Education and the desire for self-fulfilment that it promotes are the primary characteristics of the knowledgeable citizen. So far theorists, presented in this work, have varied on the extent to which high levels of education is seen to have a positive political impact.

Sartori argues that average citizens are incapable of comprehending and active participation in politics. He further argues that apathy is not a result of illiteracy, socio-economic status or a lack of information (Sartori 1962). The other side of what is stated by Sartori is, if lack of education is not a problem then greater education will not necessarily be a solution. Laudon expresses a similar sentiment as indicated earlier in this work. Laudon sees increased levels of education as not only being ineffective but also a contributor to apathy.

On the other hand, theorists such as Burnheim, Fishkin, Christiano and Held have acknowledged that education equips citizens with the tools to deliberate. Held noted that in the Athenian democracy the citizenry consisted of educated individuals. Christiano and Fishkin introduce what they refer to as deliberative opinion poll. Deliberative poll implies a degree of education, at the very least, it implies an ability to comprehend and make an informed decision on political issues. Christiano outlines the virtues of deliberative opinion poll:

Public deliberation transforms, modifies, and clarifies the beliefs and preferences of the citizens of a political society. ... One result is that public deliberation generally improves the quality of legislation by enhancing citizens understanding of their society. ... Second result, the laws of these societies may tend to be rationally justified more often in the eyes of their citizens than those of a society that do not undergo an intensive process of deliberation on legislation. ... Third result, certain desirable qualities in citizens are enhanced when they must participate in the process of deliberation. People who participate frequently in deliberation as free and

equal citizens are more likely, many think, to develop traits of autonomy, rationality, and morality. In this instance the virtue of citizens are increased by the process (Bohman & Rehg ed. 1997, 510).

Deliberative opinion poll, though it clearly implies a high level of knowledge and education on the part of the electorate, only involves a microcosm of society. The randomness of the selection process would provide the impetus for the rest of society to keep themselves relatively well` informed to be able to participate if called upon to do so (Fishkin 1991). Fishkin outlines how the deliberative opinion poll would work:

The media could be expected to dramatize the process so much that most citizens would be glad of the opportunity to play a serious role in the important historical events. Second, the delegates would be at least minimally compensated for their time. Events of this kind must be set up so that it is possible for any delegate to participate regardless of economic background. A third point is that the role of delegate should be considered analogous to that of juror. If this kind of event should become institutionalized, it should come to be considered an obligation of citizenship (Fishkin 1991, 9).

Another key factor to note is deliberative opinion poll, as described by both Fishkin and Christiano, is designed to function within a representative system.

Burnheim offers inadvertent support for the importance of education in a participatory system, a system he refers to as demarchy.

While recognizing that people may differ greatly in particular abilities the demarchist does not believe that there is any group whose capacity entitle them to a position of special or wide ranging power in the community. At the base level choices made by people of no special ability are likely to be reasonable provided they are based on sound knowledge. They may need expert advice, but the judgement about whose advice to take is appropriately made by the lay person (Burnheim 1985, 156).

Burnheim in identifying that developed countries like Canada have the necessary components for an easy application of demarchy clearly hits on the importance to education to the participatory process.

Broad conditions are already secure in the 'advanced' countries of both the 'first' and 'second' worlds. ... It is more difficult to speak about the so-called third world, however. In many cases standards of education and knowledge

of the mechanisms of large-scale societies may be lacking, as well as other conditions (Burnheim 1985, 157).

Finally, Bohman, in a direct contradiction to Sartori's argument that states people do not learn how to vote by voting, claims that participation has an educational effect on the participant. Bohman states, "civic republicans propose that participation itself has strong educative effects and is thus able to transform interest and preference so as to produce a shared conception of the common good"(Bohman 1996, 29). Spitz addresses the issue of a common good and collective decision making. Spitz argues:

The proverbial town meeting cannot promulgate its sense of justice except in minimal ways because all rule involves administration and enforcement as well as legislation, the town meeting substitutes for only a part of these governing process (i.e., for that part of the legislative process concerned with passing laws but not, *nota bene*, for that part of the legislative process concerned with overseeing administration) (Spitz 1996, 123).

Spitz does not believe that the participatory system would allow for administration. Spitz further adds:

Majority decision making makes sense only when there are over riding common interest, so that belonging to the group and submitting to group discipline is worthwhile. There is little evidence that such solidarity exist in communities as ill defined as the General Motors Cooperation. A factory is not a social or political community, and it would be a mistake to confuse like (associational) interest with those deeper common interest that make community a worthwhile human enterprise (Spitz 1996, 126).

The diversity in today's multicultural societies is problematic for Spitz. Diverse interest even homogeneous societies, would also make societies governed collectively susceptible to gridlock.

The arguments both in support and against a greater degree of participatory democracy have necessitated the project. Previous studies on this issue have been mainly focused on other regions. Though general concepts are applicable to this region, they do not offer a comprehensive picture of the issue as it relates to Canada. The only study

seemingly exclusively devoted to this issue in this region focused on one aspect of direct democracy. It examined the application of referenda across Canada and calls for a greater application of referenda in the future. This study is also dated, not because it was done so long ago but because technology has advanced to an almost unrecognisable form between the present and when this study was conducted a short eight years ago. The author found no studies on direct democracy in Canada since the expansion of the internet.

The theoretical background of the problem rests in the notion expressed by theorists that have assessed the problem of governance within a state. An overwhelming number of theorists, both proponents and opponents of direct democracy alike, have stated, suggested or implied that direct democracy, where possible, is the most desirable form of government. The limitations to achieving this have been the ability on the part of the citizen to assume the responsibility, and the impracticality of trying to consult the people of a large nation on every issue. It is our duty as citizens to explore even the slightest possibility of achieving this objective.

The fact that there are no recent studies in print that focuses on the issues of direct democracy, lends itself to the justification for this project. It is a given that political conditions differ in nations, as Mill indicated, political culture is a product of the society in which it emerges. This factor means that the possibility for application of the tools of direct democracy will vary from nation to nation. This necessitates a study be conducted in every region to determine the possibility for the application of direct democracy.

Previous studies have been very effective in identifying and isolating factors associated with direct democracy. There are any numbers of impressive and persuasive arguments in support of, and against, direct democracy. This work takes the position that

the broad brush used in painting both corners must be trimmed. The arguments should be made specific to various regions. The levels of education and systems of government in various regions may support a push for greater participation. It is toward this end that the arguments in the next chapter will directly focus on Canada. Chapter Three will contest and endorse the views expressed in this chapter, while presenting evidence that will provide options for the direction of Canadian politics.

Chapter Three

The case for a greater degree of Direct Democracy

In this chapter, the discussion will bring together all the pros and cons associated with implementing a system that employs a greater degree of direct democracy. It will be a feasibility study of sorts, attempting to determine if the conditions in Canada are suited to a greater degree of direct democracy. It will look at the present government in Canada and determine if it adequately meets the needs of Canadians regarding political involvement at the federal and provincial levels. This chapter will examine arguments in an attempt to determine if levels of technological and academic advancements are adequate to the task of restoring to the people the power to govern themselves more directly. .

As evidence demonstrated in the literature review, governments are a necessary part of civil society. Every social union has some semblance of a governing body. The difference is that some are communal while others are hierarchical. A further examination would reveal that all are hierarchical because they exclude, at some level, some members of the society. For example, even the most democratic society has an age criteria for participation in the political decision making process. It is safe to say that all societies use a similar age component to exclude some members of society from the process. Further some societies exclude people who have contravened the laws. This work will continue on the assumptions that exclusions of people by virtue of age and contravention of the laws from the political process are acceptable. Further, people who are medically unable to participate will also not be considered in the arguments being made. This project accepts that not all the members of the society will have the capacity to participate on all occasions. The position being taken will be that a reasonable

majority who will participate. It is also argued that mass participation will eliminate a significant number of the problems associated with the current system. Let us begin the discussion by assessing whether there is a need for change in the Canadian system of government.

The Canadian system of representative government steeped in tradition, is based on a belief that the average person is incapable of making rational decisions regarding his day-to-day governance. This system seeks to protect the people from themselves. The parliamentary system as it was originally conceived was based fundamentally on the representation of the constituents. The representative system was originally made up of loosely connected representatives who bargained for the interest of their constituents. Under this system, the representative was responsible to his constituents (Malcolmson and Myers 1996). Though still responsible to the constituents in theory, most members of parliament have a split loyalty. The split loyalty is a result of the party system.

Canada's parliamentary system works on a basis of an adversarial party system, with an unmistakable distinction between government and opposition (Jackson & Jackson). According to Jackson and Jackson, parliament exists to:

Provide a forum for members to debate major political issues of the day. The debate is relayed to the public by mass media, informing and also openly responding to public opinion.

- It has policy-making functions including the passage of legislation.
- It has representational functions since it is responsible to express the interest and opinions of the electorate and deal with the problems of constituents.
- It has system maintenance functions that contribute to the working and legitimacy of other parts of the political system and the state itself (Jackson & Jackson 1999, 154).

The parliamentary system is such that the winning party most often constitutes a majority of the members of in the House of Commons. If the winning party has a majority, it

forms the government. This majority allows the controlling the government, a blank cheque on which it may write all legislation during its term in office. An instance referred to in Chapter One by Campbell and Pal shows the power of the controlling party to limit the debate on legislation. A majority government is all but guaranteed passage of a piece of legislation sanctioned by its leader.

Political Parties are a natural result of alliances formed among like-minded representatives. The emergence of political parties had a tremendous effect on the political process. Political parties are a manifestation of cleavages that are designed to secure re-election. White *et al* argue that: "the organization of major parties reflects their primary function as a vote getting mechanism" (White *et al* 1994, 108).

Political parties have been seen as both beneficial and detrimental to the political process. On the one hand, they serve to minimize or eliminate gridlock in the political machinery; on the other hand, parties often limit debates on issues and remove the individual accountability of the members of parliament. Political parties do a lot more than eliminate gridlock in parliament. Parties serve to educate the electorate, multi-party systems have the effect of creating a balance through presenting many sides of an issue. Political parties aid the political process by recruiting new people to the process. They also facilitate fundraising efforts that differ a portion of the cost of elections (Malcolmson & Myers 1996).

Political parties can often cause members of parliament to be confronted with issues of dual loyalty, raising the question of serving the interest of the constituents or towing the party line. The strong party policy in Canada means that the interest of the constituents is often secondary to towing the party line. Party policies in Canada,

specifically towing the party line, have in effect created virtual limited term oligarchies, as described in Chapter Two. Parties in Canada are in theory divided into two types, the cadre and the mass party. A cadre party is one in which the party structure is top down; while a mass party on the other hand, is a system that panders to the wishes of the masses, a bottom up structure (Jackson & Jackson 2000). A close look however, will reveal that all the parties are closer to being of the cadre variety. Parties can be seen to consult the people before an impending election, and when an issue is very controversial. Outside of these situations, political parties are the private armies of their leaders.

Party leaders exert a tremendous control over their parties. This is particularly true of the party in power. The ever-looming threat of a cabinet shuffle keeps members of parliament in line. This control is referred to as party discipline. Jackson and Jackson identified a few ways in which the party leaders coerce serving members:

They may lose their positions on parliamentary committees. ... They maybe threatened with being suspended from caucus meetings or even expelled from the party. ... As well as these 'sticks,' party leaders also have a number of 'carrots' to keep their backbenchers in line. These included such goodies as promotion to cabinet minister or committee chair: appointments to the Senate and numerous positions in public corporations and Crown agencies (Jackson & Jackson 2000, 167).

Party discipline is maintained by the chief whip and an assistant whip; these are members that approach other members and express clearly the position expected on a particular issue.

The government using party discipline and by virtue of its majority in the house of commons make the prime minister, a virtual monarch with regards to the range of his powers. The obvious result is that the parliamentary system that should translate the wishes of citizens into action does not. Instead, wishes of one individual and or those that influence him become that of the nation.

Parliamentary democracy has the potential to be grossly undemocratic because of the strong control exercised by the party and the leader of the party. This strength is not exclusive to the party in power, it is just most effectively employed by them. Jackson and Jackson argue that the parties in the opposition employ carrots and whips just as effectively. Opposition parties use membership on committees as both carrots and whips to keep party members onside.

Hurst points to this as well as other features as signifiers of a wholly undemocratic system. He notes that the role of the legislature, that of debating and making laws, is usurped in the parliamentary system employed in Canada. He notes that the roles are reversed as discussed in Chapter Two. This brings us to what is considered by opposition parties and some academics (H MacIvor 1999, Carty 1989, Blais & Gidengil 1991) to be the most pressing problem in Canada's democracy today, the electoral process.

Canada employs a single member plurality (SMP) as its system for electing its members of parliament.

The single member plurality system, sometimes called "first past the post," is the simplest of designs. A country is divided into separate constituencies, and each constituency chooses legislative representative. In an election the winner of a plurality, that is the largest number of votes in each constituency, becomes the representative. The candidate does not need an absolute majority of votes – just more than any other candidate receives (Jackson & Jackson 2000, 399).

The single member plurality system works well in a two party or two candidate race, guaranteeing a majority, but in a multi-party or multi-candidate arena such as Canada, often times the winning candidate or party will not have a numeric majority. Frequently, the government will in actuality only represent, by virtue of votes earned, a minority of its citizens.

There are serious problems with the system of government in Canada. The problems are widespread and deep rooted. It was the best system in its day but that day is all but over. It is time to examine new ways of governance, new ways that accurately reflect the desires of the citizens. H MacIvor (1998) has advocated the adoption of a proportionally representative system. The system of proportional representation would see a more accurate reflection of votes received to seats awarded. Boyer on the other hand has suggested a move to a system that employs the principles of direct democracy.

The case for Direct Democracy

Direct Democracy, the system where the citizens would play both roles of the governors and the governed, would eliminate the problems mentioned as inherent to the parliamentary system. Direct democracy has been rejected repeatedly as an impractical and potentially catastrophic system for large modern states. Theorists, (Aristotle 1984, Burke 1992, Madison 1864, Schumpeter 1950 and Mill 1991) with varying degrees of tolerance for democracy have warned against adopting direct democracy. This section will respond to criticisms against direct democracy as an option for a system of government in large states.

Direct democracy has been argued to be impractical because of several reasons, voter apathy, the ability of its people, and the size and diversity of the state. On the issue of voter apathy, it is argued that lack of citizen participation would cripple direct democracy. This is a strong argument because direct democracy as it is defined in this work would rely solely on citizen participation to make it work. Direct democracy in its truest form is intended to afford the citizens the opportunity to participate. Currently,

levels of political participation are measured by levels of turnout during elections. This currently sits at 67% nationally. There has been a significant decline in voter turnout for national elections. The percentage turnout, which stood at a respectable 75 percent in 1988, has fallen to a dispiriting 67 percent by 1997, as seen in fig3-1, indicating that voter apathy is a big problem for the currently employed form of democracy.

This decline can be attributed to many factors on the individual level. The Progressive Conservative Party was falling apart, people were all but guaranteed a Liberal victory. Therefore, there was no need to get out to vote. There are any numbers of reasons, but the trend toward lower participation is clear. Canadians are disillusioned by governments and the role they play.

Voter participation	1984	1988	1993	1997
	%			
Canada	75.3	75.3	69.6	67.0
Newfoundland	65.5	67.1	55.1	55.2
Prince Edward Island	84.6	84.9	73.2	72.8
Nova Scotia	75.4	74.8	64.7	69.4
New Brunswick	77.3	75.9	69.6	73.4
Quebec	76.2	75.2	77.1	73.3
Ontario	75.8	74.6	67.7	65.6
Manitoba	73.2	74.7	68.7	63.2
Saskatchewan	77.9	77.8	69.4	65.3
Alberta	69.1	75.0	65.2	58.5
British Columbia	77.6	78.7	67.8	65.6
Yukon	77.9	78.4	70.4	69.8
Northwest Territories	67.9	70.8	62.9	58.9
Source: Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, <i>Thirty-sixth General Election 1997: Official Voting Results</i> , Ottawa, 1997.				

Table 3-1 (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/State/Government/govt09c.htm>)

The decline in voter turnout depicted in table 3-1 makes sense when contrasted with the results of a Royal Commission Study conducted by Blais and Gidengil. The study found a very high level of voter cynicism among Canadians. “

Approximately 80 percent of Canadians believe that those elected to parliament soon lose touch with the people and that most candidates in federal elections make promises that they have no intention of fulfilling (Blais & Gidengil 1991, 36).

As was discussed in Chapter Two, the Canadian government seemingly has, in the nineties, given up the sovereignty of the state to big business. This is however, not a recent phenomenon, what has changed is the fact that through media outlets the public are now better informed. Citizens, now more aware of the issues, want to be heard. Increasingly the ills of representatives are being peddled by the media for citizen scrutiny. The potential for representatives to misrepresent is no longer just a potential. Ian Greene and David Shugarman provide many instances of representatives misrepresenting.

Gravel somehow obtained a confidential list of all the federal government's leases of office space, and he used this information to promise important federal government lease to certain landlords – in return for kickbacks. The kick backs took various forms: an agreement by the landlord to give a percentage of the proceeds to the PC party, buy a \$5,000 ticket to a P C fundraising event, provide free renovation work on Gravel's office or residence, or offer personal bribes to Gravel. ... Gravel's lawyer managed to keep the case out of court until after the 1988 federal election. Just three weeks after the Conservatives won the election Gravel pled guilty to the charges and admitted receiving \$97,000 in bribes and kickbacks from business persons and contractors. ... According to Stevie Cameron, Gravel admitted to her that he was persuaded to plead guilty by an official in the Prime Minister's Office. (Greene & Shugarman 1997, 64)

There are any numbers of instances in which MLAs are involved in shady dealings. These deals may not constitute crimes in themselves, but are unbecoming of their position, and the faith the citizenry have bestowed in them.

MLA Ralph Klein violated the Alberta Conflict of Interest Act in January 1994.

Premier Klein reported the acquisition of the Multi-Corp shares to Robert Clark, the ethics commissioner. (The report was late, but that is a minor breach of the rules.) However, Mr Klein did not report that the shares were acquired at below-market value and that they had not been paid for, and both of these facts should have been disclosed, according to the legislation. This is because the below-market-value transaction could be considered a "gift or benefit," and because money owing for the shares was a liability that might affect the ability if the member to act impartially (Greene & Shugarman 1997, 90).

When caught with his hand in the cookie jar, Klein threatened to resign, effectively squashing the report that would have probably indicated his wrongdoing.

On the day prior to the release of Clark's report, Klein made a public statement that he would resign if Clark's report indicated even a "hint " of wrong doing (Greene & Shugarman 1997, 90)

The report came back without mentioning the fact that the shares were acquired below the market value, and Clark blamed himself for not asking the question that would have revealed that the shares were not paid for (Greene & Shugarman 1997). Clearly the statement made by Klein, like the allegation of the intervention on the part of officials from the Prime Ministers Office, referred to above, indicate an imprudent act of misrepresentation on the part of representatives involved. The Canadian political robe is stained with many such instances of cover-ups, alleged kickbacks, and other forms of misrepresentation.

Boyer identifies what he believes to be the reason for Canada's democratic status, for him it rests traditionally in "our constitutional precept that sovereignty resides not in the people but in the Crown" (Boyer 1992, 40). The elected representatives serve the crown as opposed to serving the people. Once elected, too many representatives serve themselves as indicated by the actions of Gravel and Klein. This seemingly self-serving attitude and the exclusive nature of representative democracy are major contributors to voter apathy, as it exists in Canada today.

Even in deals where there are no clear conflict of interest issues, government is seen to be selling the sovereignty of the state to big business. Government in Canada has come under fire in recent years for a series of decisions that have disenfranchised citizens. Federal cutbacks in the areas of education and health have not been received well by Canadians, who have responded with a renewed demand for greater role in

governance. An increase in the numbers of community-based self-help groups have seemingly resulted from a corresponding decline in government services. Hard-line government policies and cutbacks have created a more perceptive citizen. Voluntary associations voicing any number of concerns and filling the void created by government cutbacks have almost tripled in the last twelve years. The Canadian Almanac's 1986-87 report documented a total of just over seven thousand voluntary associations (Land 1987). In the 1999-2000 issue the count of registered voluntary association had jumped to just over twenty thousand (Kulesza 2000,). Barber applauds the efforts of the citizen at the community levels as practitioners of a true political spirit.

"It is very well for you to preach the virtues of democracy," said an irate woman to me at a regional neighbourhood conference in Louisville recently. "but I am afraid what with my work in the homeowners association, my PTA community service subcommittee, the church bazaar fund-raiser for our soup kitchen (that's for our homeless), the library's 'National Issues Forum' (I'm the chair again this year), and then I've had jury duty twice in the last eighteen months – well I mean I just don't have time for politics." Now if by politics we mean what politicians do while we watch them on TV, the woman is right : she counts as one more complacent non-participant, hasn't written her congressperson in years, doesn't lick envelopes for the Republican party's gubernatorial campaign, and she may even have forgotten to vote in last spring's primaries. But if by politics we mean what Alexis de Tocqueville meant, a devotion to the local spirit of liberty manifested as continuous and nosy activity in and on behalf of the local community, then she is a model citizen, and only one of a numberless crowd of Americans who pursue vigorous neighbourhood lives (Barber 1984 xii).

The creation of voluntary associations around issues is educating the average citizen in the area of public policy, they are becoming increasingly astute regarding the inner workings of the legislative process. This becomes clear when we look at the roles played by so-called 'special interest groups', consulted increasingly by representative for input on specific policy issues. The next section will look at education in Canada and the significance of an educated electorate to the political process.

Education

The impact of education on the political process is undeniable. Held notes that the Democracy of Athens was possible because there was a high level of education among the council. Education facilitated the transformation of agrarian societies into industrialized societies. Dobbs argues, "the influence of the cheap press may be traced at the same period in the growth of debating societies in the towns" (Dobbs 1969, 122). The cheap press allowed people to be educated on the issues as well as providing the issues upon which an active mind could deliberate. Further, according to Nevitte, "the relationship between levels of education and interest in politics is quite strong. ... The general relationship between education and interest in politics is stable; those with high levels of education are twice as likely as those with low levels to be very interested in politics" (Nevitte 1996, 53).

Does education make a difference? To answer the question, look to the educational institutions of the past and their curriculum. Educational institutions of the past were single tracked. Picture the one room schoolhouse in which students were taught the three R's. Trade schools taught a specific skill, necessary to a specific task. Institutions today offer a much more rounded curriculum, political socialization is taught to all at various stages of their development through courses such as History, Geography, Philosophy and Political Science. A High school education has been made compulsory for all students up to the age of eighteen indicating a commitment on society's part to having an educated citizenry. There are today, greater numbers of citizens pursuing post secondary education. A look at Table 3-2 reveals that the level of education is on the rise and that an increased number of Canadians are now pursuing education well beyond the

twelfth grade. Greater numbers in the pursuit of post secondary education means that a greater number of people are being taught the skills to function as governors of the state. What is meant by this is, firstly, educational institutions teach people how to think, and it purports to provide the skills to engage an issue, being both thoughtful and deliberative. Secondly, educational institutions provide specialized knowledge all areas necessary different aspects of government, averaged citizens are able to become as equipped as representatives or their advisors. In the past, the difference between members of society who took on the role of political representative and those that did not could be clearly defined by the level of education to which they ascended, there are exceptions of wealth and family ties, but a definite pattern was present. Education in this respect is the great leveller. Education endows the citizenry with the ability to make good political decisions. Beedham argues that:

By the late 1990s, many people have come to realize that they are as well (or as badly) equipped to make most political decision as the men and women they elect to represent them. They have as much education, nearly as much access to the needed information, and as big a stake in getting the judgment right; if they give a question their attention, they can usually offer a sensible answer (Beedham 1996 ps11).

Education has received mixed reviews by political theorists. Theorists such as Laudon and Sartori have expressed opposing sentiments regarding the role education plays in the political process. On the one hand, Laudon suggests that an increase in the level and numbers of educated citizens makes for a more productive and deliberative society. Then on the other hand, he also notes that this increase in education creates a sense of frustration for the well-educated electorate that is limited by allowance of the representative system (Laudon 1977). Sartori argues that education, or the lack thereof, illiteracy, has nothing to do with political participation. For Sartori educating people will not make them participate more (Sartori 1965). On that point, both Sartori and Laudon

seemingly agree, though they are not on the same page. What is meant by this is that both theorists arrive at the conclusion that education is somewhat ineffectual on the political process for different reasons.

Population by education levels completed 1976 - 1996					
	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996
Population 15 yrs +	Number				
Total	16,890,350	18,609,285	19,634,100	21,304,740	22,628,925
Less than grade 9	4,285,390	3,851,285	3,473,640	3,051,900	2,812,015
Grades 9 to 13	7,440,765	8,122,465	8,354,030	9,071,580	9,131,775
Some postsecondary	4,077,825	5,145,355	5,927,950	6,761,505	7,684,435
University degree	1,086,370	1,490,180	1,878,480	2,419,750	3,000,695
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census <i>Nation</i> tables.					

Table 3-2 (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Education/educ03a.htm>)

In a 1998 study, Blais and Dobrzynska found that when other variables were held constant voter turnout increased with a subsequent increase in literacy.

A minimum degree of literacy is a prerequisite to a good turnout. The relationship is curvilinear. Holding all other variables constant, turnout increases by a hefty 16 points when the illiteracy rate moves from the highest level [85%] to the average [12%] but by only one point when it moves from the average to the lowest level [2.55] (Blais & Dobrzynska 1998, 244).

Provided the findings of Blais and Dobrzynska are correct, this increase in the numbers of the population pursuing higher degree of education promises that greater political involvement for the Canada's political future. Table 3-2 shows a numeric increase in the numbers of people attending post secondary institutions and obtaining degrees. Quick calculations reveal that there is better than a 1.5 percent increase, at every period documented, in the numbers of people obtaining university degrees. This improves to better than 3 percent, and on occasion over 4 percent, per period when degree holders are added to those with some postsecondary study.

As well, Dalton joins theorists like Mill, Locke, and Tocqueville among others in arguing that the citizenry, in order to be effective, should have a high degree of

sophistication and political awareness (Dalton 1996, 15). Dalton further points out that scientific surveys in the 1940's and 1950's revealed an uninformed electorate voted based on group loyalties instead of deliberative consultation (Dalton 1996, 17). As an example, Dalton delivers that 'over used' indicator of the electorate's inability to connect issues. "Voters who felt taxes were too high nevertheless favoured spending increases for many specific government programs"(Dalton 1996, 18).

In response to the critics, an argument could be made that people will be less likely to consider the connections between issues because of the division of labour that gives us representative democracy. This can be seen daily in the offices and on other work sites, people refuse to take jobs that fall outside that which they are paid to perform. Citizens in a representative democracy believe that they elected representatives to perform legislative duties. Representatives are required to make decisions of government for which they are well compensated. Therefore when asked to consider political issues, they are despondent. An extension to this is indicated in a point made by Laudon. If people believe that their opinions are not of significance then they will not be considerate (Laudon 1977).

A critic might retort; people have a vested interest in the political fibre of the society. Though average citizens are prepared to discuss and offer opinions on political issues, ultimately they will refuse to take responsibility, because for them, that is what politicians are paid to do. The inept citizen can be argued therefore, to be a by-product of representative democracy. Without the responsibility associated with action, action taken is taken lightly.

Dalton's argument also loses its weight when contrasted with Nevitte's arguments on post materialism. Post materialism is a notion that people, having achieved an acceptable level of comfort and security, are free to turn their attentions to other aspects of their existence, in this case political activism. "Those with higher levels of education have less confidence in governmental institutions, more confidence in non-governmental institutions, lower levels of national pride, and are more 'cosmopolitan' than their less-educated counterparts" (Nevitte 1996, 70).

With the expansion of education, and with the information explosion, the once-large skill gap between leaders and publics has narrowed. Consequently, organizations that invite little participation from "below," or that are premised upon low levels of citizen input, may be adequate for those satisfied with the older, elite-guide modes of participation. But such institutions carry little appeal for the increasing numbers of informed and interested citizens who occupy the expanding ranks of the middle class ... and who hanker for newer modes of participation (Nevitte 1996, 55).

Nevitte is clearly arguing that the more skilled, better-educated citizen wants to play a greater role, a role he adds that is not available to citizens under institutionalised representative democracy:

[T]he trends embraces more general evaluations about the kinds of institutions political leaders occupy, how hierarchical the institutions are, and whether the institutions provide citizens with opportunities for meaningful participation (Nevitte 1996, 55).

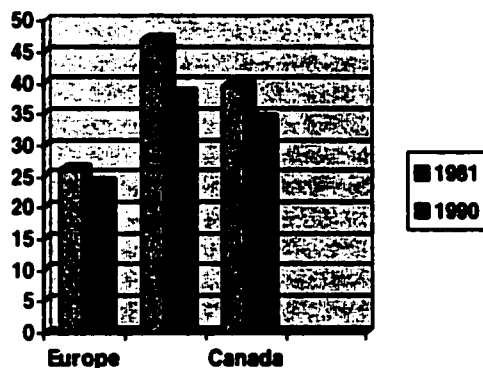


Fig 3-1 Percentage Expressing "High" Confidence in Government Institutions 1981-1990
Source: 1981 and 1990 World Values Surveys

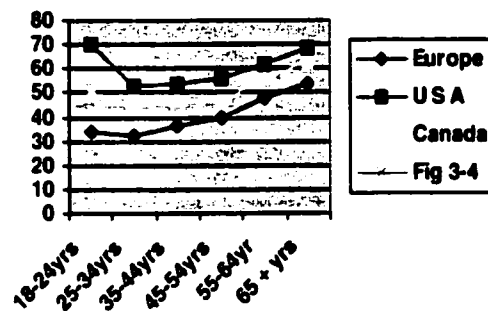


Fig 3-2 Percentage Expressing “High” Confidence Governmental institutions, by Age Group

Source: 1981 and 1990 World Values Surveys

that the lowest level of confidence was in the 35-44-age range indicated in figure 3-4. One possible explanation would read, governmental institutions and institutionalised non-governmental organizations develop hieratical structures that discourage participation. Both institutions would tend to get greater support from citizens at over 45; citizens over 45 have opted to effect change from within the system. They are involved in larger numbers and by that virtue will express a greater confidence as they are in effect expressing confidence in themselves.

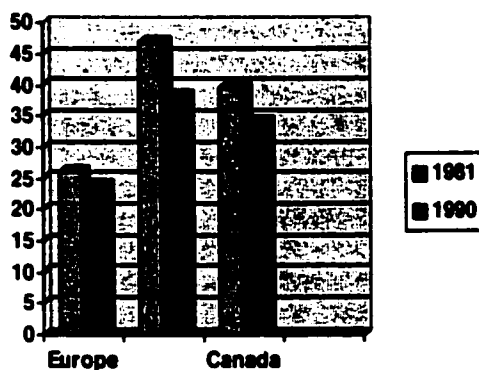


Fig 3-3 Percentage Expressing “High” Confidence in Non-Government Institutions 1981-1990

Source: 1981 and 1990 World Values Surveys

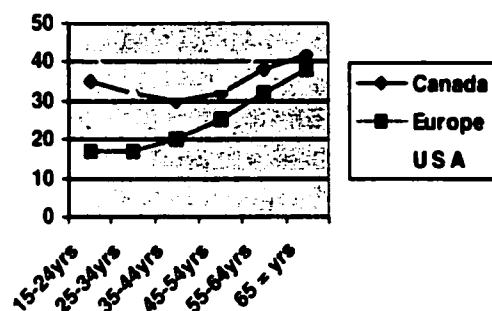


Fig 3-4 Percentage Expressing “High” Confidence Non-Governmental institutions, by Age Group

Source: 1981 and 1990 World Values Surveys.

Finally, in answering the question, does the potential for direct democracy increase with a proportional increase in the level of education of the electorate? The answer would have to be yes. The problem being that the system of representative democracy makes the higher education ineffective. In other words, the ability to play is meaningless without the field upon which to do so.

The true political impact of the educated citizenry is hampered by the system of representative democracy that institutionalises abject dependency. The impracticality of direct democracy sold wholesale to the citizens has apparently had negative impact on the desire to participate. Citizens have been taught to leave the role of governing to an elite few. It is only with the advent of communication technology that the impact of an educated citizenry can be made to bear on the politics of the society. .

Communications Technology

A renewed wave of populist sentiment has appeared in Canada in the 1990s, reaching a level of intensity not seen for nearly seven decades. It is manifesting itself in increased support for the instruments of direct democracy – the popular initiative, the referendum and the recall – and through disenchantment with the institutions of representative government, which is directed not just at Parliament and political parties but at the electoral process itself (MacDonald 1991, 301)

MacDonald recognizes that there is presently distain toward politicians and the political process. Cries for change in the political process have gotten louder and more frequent with the development in communication technology. The arsenal of communications technology available to Canadian society today, coupled with the tools of direct democracy, and the increased ability of the electorate makes this a very exciting time for the future of Canadian democracy.

The optimism regarding the future of Canadian democracy is not felt in all corridors. Some theorists (H MacIvor 1997, Arterton 1987) have very reserved feelings about a democracy driven by technology. There are issues of security, the ability of all to use the technology, and the reliability of the technology are the ones that have caused the most concerns. Pessimists have delivered a further warning that new technologies have come up very short of the predicted expectations in the past. This is where the argument on the technological component of the emerging democracy will begin. The question being addressed will be, does the new technologies make a greater degree of direct democracy possible.

Historically, new forms of technology have had the effect of widening the base for political participation. That fact is not in dispute. Instead, theorists like Arterton and Grossman argue that the new media did not deliver the political revolutions that they had been expected to. Let us examine this. Grossman and Arterton both argue that television did not deliver as promised. According to Arterton, television promised freer, vital, robust political discourse between candidates, instead we got campaign commercials and instead of insight into proposals, we got staged media events. He argues that diversity was substituted with a steady repeated diet of news material.

It might be that Arterton spoke too soon; Canadian cable television today delivers to the subscriber a steady stream of coverage on the daily proceedings of the federal and provincial legislature. Whether the debate is robust or vital is not a feature over which the medium has control. That aspect is left to the debaters. Television can no more make a debate exciting and vital than it can score goals in a soccer game. Television did take a while to deliver on its promise to deliver politics to the people in some respects, but in others, it has delivered in abundance. Political rallies, campaigns etc, have been well covered by television. While some media appearances are carefully orchestrated as Arterton points out, the shame would be more accurately levied on the political process than on the medium that makes it available to the public. It is true that media seem to produce the same news material. An objective look at this problem will again reveal that, once we remove whatever spin a gatekeeper might add to a story, it is a depiction of what is there.

Arterton stated; "In spite the direct link with politicians and the voters, many citizens remain profoundly ignorant of even the most rudimentary political information. Rather than a marked jump in participatory politics, the last twenty years have witnessed a disturbing decline in voter participation" (Arterton 1987, 16). Arterton is correct about the media fostering the decline in voter participation. He is premature in his assumption of why the decline occurred. The decline in Canadian political participation is not a result of lack of information; it is instead the result of having information, as argued by MacDonald, Neviite, Laudon and others.

The decline in Canadian voter turnout depicted in table 3-1 is the result of a falloff in turnout of the 18 – 30 years segment of the electorate, suggested by the low confidence

in governmental institutions indicated in figure 3-3. This fact lends itself to Laudon's hypothesis, in which he argues that highly educated citizens, dissatisfied with the avenues for expression afforded them in the representative political system, withdraw from the process.

If it flows from Laudon's arguments that technology is a factor in the decline of voter turnout, it would follow that greater applications of technology will lead to a greater decline in participation, not increased participation as advocates argue. Technology has helped to educate and inform the people, bringing them closer to the political process, but may have also made them cynical of the political process. Will more technology, the internet, facilitate greater participation and quiet cynicism?

Citizen malcontent with the present political structure forces a search for alternatives. MacDonald is referring to this search for alternatives when he speaks of a renewed wave of populist sentiment. Yoneji Masuda identifies the sentiments as conditions for a change in the political system. He offers four:

The first reason why the political system in the information society will have to be changed from parliamentary democracy to participatory democracy, is that the *behavioural pattern of ordinary citizens will change*. They will be less satisfied with mere material wants than they are now: *There chief desire will be for self-realization*. ... However, in the information society where the demand for self-fulfilment will become the motivation for action, the process of satisfying the people's demand for attaining objectives will find fulfilment in the production and utilization of information, the selection of action and the attainment of set aims. ... This is the way in which, in the information society, people's desires will change direction toward the attainment of objectives, which will mean that their demand for participation in decision making and the management of the economic, social and political system will become stronger. ...

The second reason is that *the powers of the state and of commercial enterprises have greatly expanded*, and that *policy decisions made by such massive organizations cannot have far reaching effects on the lives of ordinary people*. ...

The third reason is that *many of the questions we have to decide are matters that concern all of mankind, global issues that know no national boundaries and the settlement of which directly affects the lives of all people*. ...

The fourth reason is that *technological difficulties, that until now made it impossible for large numbers of citizens to participate in policy making, have now been solved by the revolution in computer-communications technology.* ... One of the major factors that have stood in the way of direct participation of ordinary citizens in national policy-making was technical. To consider ant such proposition would have involved the work of great numbers of personnel and a long period of time, and tremendous cost. This becomes clear if we recall how a national referendum is held (Masuda 1980, 101).

Masuda opens by noting that the democracy must change because people's behaviours are changing. He notes that the connection between their economic, social and political behaviour is now more definite. The desire that once drove citizen to want to control their economic destiny now drives them to control their social and political destiny as well, as suggested in the second and third reasons. Masuda identifies as his fourth reason a lifting of a technological barrier. He notes that what is now available is the ability for large numbers of citizens to participate. He is arguing that new technology facilitates participation. He explains:

Now the remarkable development computer and communications technology has solved this problem at one stroke. The development of communications satellites in particular, and home computers, along with time-sharing systems, together offer a solution to the problems of personnel, time and cost. Furthermore, citizens will be enabled to participate not merely once but repeatedly, enabling them to understand more deeply, from many angles and in a long-range perspective, both the nature and implications of problems arising on any issue. From this cooperation could come the fairest, the most reasonable composite solution, so that a final solution from among all proposals will come from understanding and popular consent. We can add that the people would be enabled to participate from time to time in dynamically changing any solution adopted, taking into consideration the actual results of implementation of their selection, and consistent with changes in the objective situation (Masuda 1980,103).

Masuda sees the computer as the technology that will facilitate greater citizen participation. If this is contrasted with Loudon's argument on apathy, it is becoming clear that technology, while creating apathy in the richly educated segment of the citizenry has also offered an outlet for the desire to participate. The outlet created will

only be viable if, as Masuda suggest, the parliamentary system is changed to a system that permits greater participatory on the part of citizens.

Masuda refers to computer technology solving the problem of personnel, time and cost. The problem of personnel refers to what Masuda had earlier identified as a large number of people having to come together. The computer solves this problem by bringing people together through computer networks. The networking computer system has taken the world by storm. Unlike networks of the past that were connected directly in the same physical structure or by laying new cable lines, the current network system, the internet, sees computers being connected by way of existing phone and television cable networks. The wireless web has also been established and is growing at the tremendously fast rate, much faster than the communications technology that preceded it (Schneier 1995).

The second problem said to be solvable by the computer network is that of time. Using the computer as a broadcast medium allows information to be more quickly disseminated. If used as a voting mechanism, results can be instantly tabulated. This use would ensure that citizen counsels would be able to offer a decision on an issue in the time it would take parliament under the present system. Imagine if you will a national emergency after parliament has broken for the summer. An emergency meeting is called. Members that have left the country may not be able to return and may not be reachable. It takes time to make contact and have representatives fly back, if they are contacted at all. Computer network connection wired or wireless would facilitate, first the contact then the meeting. Citizens connected by computer network would manage the to render a

decision on the matter in a similar timeframe. There is always a majority of citizens available to vote on an issue.

On March 10th 2000, the first online legally binding election was held in Arizona. The results were astonishing. Votes cast were said to double those of the previous election in 1996.

In Yet another testament to the reach of the web, Arizona Democrats became the first Americans to vote over the internet in a legally binding election. ... To start the process, Elections.com mailed all registered Arizona democrats a personal identification number. Those who wanted to vote electronically then logged on to the Elections.com site. ... voters were also asked a personal questions ... for added security. More than 26,000 e-ballots were cast ... double the traditional votes cast in 1996.

The process was not without controversy. A ... group ...tried to block the electronic balloting, on the grounds it discriminates against minorities and the poor who typically have less access to computers, but a judge rebuffed the challenge. Many of those who did vote online praised the convenience. Dennis Jensen, a resident of Sun City, even opened his home to his neighbours so they could use his computer (Hawaleshka <http://www.macleans.ca/xta-asp/txa-view.a...base=112&searchstring=access+and+internet>).

Internet voting has far reaching ramifications. The ease expressed and the potential to increase voter turnout will make the prospects for direct democracy far more attractive.

As for net voting in Canada, "the House of Commons passed a bill on Feb.28 2000 that gives the chief electoral officer the power to test online voting. The bill is now before the Senate. As yet there are no plans for Canada's first binding e-vote" (Hawaleshka <http://www.macleans.ca/xta-asp/txa-view.a...base=112&searchstring=access+and+internet>).

Far beyond its voting tool potential, the web offers a voice to all that would speak. It has become the medium of choice for grassroots activist, because it is affordable and encompasses all forms of media. The web can be used relatively inexpensively for broadcasting audio or video; it can be used for publishing; it can be used for two-way or

conference voice or text communications. The web offers an alternative to mainstream media, and the cost and restrictions associated with it.

There are a number of websites dedicated to the ideals of democracy from the far left to the far right. Web based news media can tailor news packages to specific interest. The web is a conduit between would-be activists, giving them a louder, stronger voice. As Masuda argues, the behaviour of citizens is changing. The changes are occurring because people are coming together. The isolated cries that could easily be ignored are giving way to the well-organized demands that cannot be brushed aside.

Masuda's third solvable problem refers to the cost associated with mass participation. Traditionally, institutionalised mass participation has taken two forms, both following the same principles of voting. Election and referenda/plebiscite are the two mediums of institutionalised mass participation available to citizens. Political rallies or demonstrations, other forms of citizen participation, usually involve a small segment of the population at any given time. The cost of conducting an election or referendum can be significantly reduced by using computer-networking systems. As previously mentioned the cost of disseminating information will be reduced if it is done via the computer networks or dedicated cable channels. The recurring cost of having to set up voting outlets will disappear. The cost of tabulation will also be substantially reduced, and statistical analysis of the results will be made easier. Masuda holds out much optimism for the use of computers leading the charge for political change. However, computer use in the political process is not without its problems.

There are two primary issues of security. One is securing the data from tampering. The second would be to secure the network from computer viruses.

Tampering with ballots is not a new problem. The electoral process has been plagued with problems such as false registration, false voting, ballot stuffing and ballot tampering for a very long time. The speed and centrality of data in a computer network presents a very serious threat for the integrity of its use as a voting mechanism. Serious safeguards would have to be set in place to ensure that technicians with access to the system for the purposes of maintenance did not use this access to influence the outcome. Less serious to the integrity, but as important to the efficiency of the system, would be the ability to protect the system from computer viruses. Viruses could be used to delete the data on a system or shut it down.

On the issue of securing information from tampering, a possible security measure would be to set up filter and alternative storage areas. This is made very simple by using the technology available. Information is captured as it is entered, copied any number of times and dispatched to separate storage areas. There is plenty of space for the storage of information. This is how it would work. If there were a system set up for voting, each person would have a personal password much like a social insurance number. This would ensure that the person would have only one vote. The number would be entered to access the system and a vote would be placed. Once placed the vote would be copied to several different storage points, a few of which could not be accessed until after the final count had been entered. These alternate storage areas would serve as a confirmation of the accuracy of the results rendered. This very simple and inexpensive process would help to ensure the integrity of the procedure.

The susceptibility of a voting mechanism to the conventional viruses could be averted. The present forms of viruses have been transmitted via emails. The virus is

encoded and embedded in data being transferred and once inside the system it is unleashed, much like the Trojan horse of antiquity. Viruses are transmitted in encoded materials, much like the dreaded bio-organism that is responsible for the AIDS. Computer viruses are spread through the transfer of micro-organisms, encoded files, therefore if there is no transfer there is no possibility of the contamination. A system could be set-up where there is no actual transfer of files. Once connected to the system, all information is entered directly into the system. As one is able to communicate with a person without transferring bio-organisms, computers would allow the input of information without micro-organisms being exchanged. Picture if you will a computer job bank located at an employment office. One is able to access and enter information but one is unable without pulling the computer apart to impute any foreign entity. One must operate within the parameters set-up by the machine. A voting system would operate in much the same way. Once connected one would be subject to the parameters of the system, leaving no possibility for uploading of viruses.

A final note on security, computer technology is such that cyber crimes of the nature of transmitting viruses and penetration of secure sites are becoming more difficult to accomplish and easier to trace. The media labelled 'deadliest' virus to be unleashed to date crippled many companies, but internet savvy companies acted quickly to avert disaster. Oliver Bertin and Brian Milner of the Globe and Mail wrote:

At the Royal Bank of Canada, for example, corporate virus-fighters had already swung into action by the time David Moorcroft, vice-president of communications, arrived at work yesterday morning. He found clear warnings on his personal computer and desk telephone: "Don't open your e-mail," the messages said. Before Mr. Moorcroft showed up at his Toronto office, the bank's British operations had discovered the virus, isolated it and sent out warnings to virtually every telephone and every computer in the Royal Bank system. Those warnings arrived in North America well before the head-office staff arrived at work and that, as they used to say in cowboy movies, allowed the bank's computer experts to head the virus off at the pass.

The quick action by Royal Bank's British staff limited the damage to a handful of personal computers in the company's worldwide operations with, as far as the company believes, minimal effects. "At no time was security breached," spokesman Jeff Keay said. "This thing was contained almost immediately" (Bertin & Milner Globe & Mail 5/5/00).

This excerpt reveals another point form which to combat the potential of viruses crippling systems. Separating the email servers and or creating valve chokes that do not allow a reverse flow of information that is not specifically sent. Coding technology can manage this with virtual ease.

The next major issue facing the use of technology as a tool in the political arena is the ability of the citizenry to use the computers. Computers generally and the internet in particular are daunting to a large number of the Canadian citizens. As has been the case other with new developments, some people are suspicious and lag behind in co-opting and using them. Notwithstanding, computers are becoming a vital part of not only Canadian society but of the world.

Internet penetration, that was a mere 29.4% of Canadian households in 1996, has almost doubled and stood at 54% in 1999 (http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/demographics/0,1323,5911_331361,00.html). People are warming up to and are much more comfortable with using the net. The fact that Canada has better than 90% of its schools wired to the internet, ensures that we are a generation away from better than 80% internet penetration rate. Internet usage as a source of information is very high in at all stages of the academic development with elementary students coming at 76 percent, the lowest of all levels.

On average, during the last school year, there were seven students per computer in secondary schools. Approximately 40 percent of students had used e-mail by the end of the school year. Additionally, 73 percent of students attended an intermediate or high school that maintains its own Web site.

At the time of the survey, only 12 percent of elementary school students attended a school without Internet access for instructional purposes, while less than 3 percent of students attended intermediate and secondary schools without internet access.

In the provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick all the schools were connected to the Internet at the time of the survey.

About one-third of elementary and intermediate students, and half of all secondary students, had used e-mail. In addition, 76 percent of elementary students, 80 percent of intermediate and 87 percent of secondary students had made use of external databases to find and extract information.

Overall, just over one-third of all students had disseminated information via the Internet and about 30 percent had designed or maintained a Web site.

Internet use varied among provinces in Canada. For example, 65 percent of students in Prince Edward Island had used e-mail during the last school year compared to 31 percent in New Brunswick. Students in Prince Edward Island were also in the forefront in developing Web sites. About 46 percent had been involved in maintaining a Web site during the school year compared with 16 percent in Saskatchewan

(http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/geographics/article/0,1323,5911_222531,00.html).

Canadian students are growing up connected. Technologically they will have the tools to govern themselves educationally they will have the knowledge to govern themselves. The only component they lack, will be the system which empowers them to govern themselves.

Providing The System

We have seen that Canada has the educated citizenry and the technological capability necessary to pursuit of a greater degree of direct democracy. The question now becomes, how would such a system be implemented? What would it look like? How would it deal with the levels of apathy that currently plague representative democracy? It is by answering these questions that an answer to the remaining poser in Chapter One, namely, what difference will direct democracy make to the levels of participation in Canadian politics, will be forthcoming.

To address these questions it is necessary to revisit democracy, restate the definitions for both representative and direct and use that as the launching point from which to manufacture a workable system. Direct democracy is a system of governance in which the citizens exercise the powers of the state (legislate, make laws) themselves. Representative democracy on the other hand is a system of government in which the citizens elect representatives who in turn exercise the powers of the state. Even those theorists most opposed to direct democracy for whatever reasons have mostly argued that, given the possibility of either representative or direct democracy, direct democracy was more desirable. However, due to the impracticalities created by limited education of the citizenry and the size and population of modern states, direct democracy was thought to be untenable.

The two most substantive reasons for not employing direct democracy were the perceived inability of the population and the dynamics and cost involved in bringing people together to consider and decide on issues. The latter of the two problems, according to Masuda, can be solved by the use of technology. The former is not as easily dismissed. It has been indicated by the data that Canada is becoming a nation of highly educated citizens. However, education does not eliminate doubts of the citizen's ability to participate. The study by Blais and Dobrzynska referred to earlier in this chapter indicates that education equips citizens with the tools to be deliberative. However, a lifetime of institutionalised representation has dulled the desire of the average citizen to participate. This lack of desire, this apathy, must be remedied if direct democracy is to be adopted and sustained.

The task of re-enfranchising Canadians is a task that must be tackled systematically. The citizen, so long without the power to self-determination, must be restored their rights slowly, much like one is rehabilitated after a debilitating accident. The citizen must be taught to use the skills they have, and be taught that they can make a difference through participation. The components necessary to this procedure are already known to Canadians and are being employed in parts of the country. The components necessary to the transition from representative democracy to direct democracy are referenda, recall and initiatives.

Referenda are devices that permit citizen participation in the political process. Referenda in its modern application works as a means by which the government of the day can invite citizens to state their position on particular issues. It is said to be a tool of direct democracy because it affords citizens the right, privilege under representative democracy, to govern themselves, if only for that one issue. Recall, the second tool necessary for the transition, has as its function the empowerment of citizens. With recall, citizens are able to keep politicians accountable. It is designed to work as a deterrent to politicians who would forget that their primary role is to service their constituents. With recall, citizens have the power to remove from office a politician who is not acting in accordance with the wishes of the citizens in his or her constituency. Initiatives, the last of the three tools, enable citizens to offer proposals for new or amendments to existing legislations.

Referenda, recall and initiatives are becoming increasingly popular around the world. Here in Canada referenda are employed more at the municipal level of government but become less and less visible as we ascend to the provincial and federal

levels (Boyer 1992). These tools of direct democracy as they are referred to by Cronin have come under much criticism from many theorists. Cronin argues that these tools (referenda, recall and initiatives) do not in fact give power to the people, but instead give power to well organized special interests that are able to use the tools to influence policy decisions. Before addressing the manner in which referenda, recall and initiatives can be employed to re-enfranchise Canadians, the concerns expressed by Cronin and others will be addressed.

While it is generally agreed that recent insight into the manner in which legislators perform provides citizens with cause for concerns, there is no agreement on how these concerns should be addressed. The most vocal among us have been demanding a greater degree of direct democracy. This ranges from calls for complete government by the people to the application of safety valves that return the power of the state to the people while allowing legislators to play as significant a role as they currently play.

In response, Cronin offers the citizenry referendum, initiatives and recall, tools through which they might ensure the accountability of their representatives. In presenting the options, Cronin expresses concerns about their application and a potential for a misguided majority to wreak havoc on the society's minorities. This is a concern that is expressed by politicians and academics alike.

Specific concerns about referenda and initiatives are:

- 1) A national initiative and referendum would weaken the essential fabric of representative government. It would so undermine the representative idea of debate, deliberation, and judicious compromise as to reduce legislative responsibility and discourage qualified leaders from running for the national legislature.
- 2) A national initiative and referendum would encourage division and polarization of the nation. Highly emotional issues would be debated in

superficial media campaigns, and hate and scare tactics would often be employed.

3) A national initiative and referendum would diminish the rights and liberties of minorities.

4) A national initiative and referendum would often produce legislation drafted by well-financed special interest groups. ... Groups with great financial resources and political organizational skills would dominate the process. National initiatives would usually be won by those who could afford the best media coverage and thereby change, if not "buy" the minds of confused or indifferent voters.

5) A national initiative and referendum would not allow for prudent compromise. It would force an unfortunately rigid yes/no choice on typically unmodified and unmodifiable ballot propositions (Cronin 1989, 183-4).

Zimmerman adds a few to the list of concerns:

The protest referendum introduces unnecessary delays and uncertainty into the law-making process, which is often a lengthy one to begin with.

The referendum fails to reveal the intensity of feelings behind each "yes" or "no" vote. The majority of the electorate may be disturbed by only one provision of a law and would approve the law if the provision was repealed.

Fewer voters typically mark referenda questions than vote for candidates, and measures may be approved or rejected by a small percentage of the registered voters. Decision, in other words, are made by a plurality rather than a majority of voters (Zimmerman 1986, 57-8).

Both Zimmerman and Cronin touch on what would appear to be potentially crippling blows to the application of initiatives and referendums. However, a close examination reveals that the problems, though serious, often present a greater threat under the system of representative democracy than under a system of direct democracy.

For clarity, the concerns will be addressed as they appeared. As initiatives and referenda are being offered as tools to aid a transition from representative to direct democracy, the changes in the fabric of representative democracy are anticipated and are welcomed. The roles of representatives will have to change, mirroring the advisory and administrative roles played by bureaucrats today. Initiatives and referenda should be

compatible to a representative system that, in theory, serves the people and would seek to advance the desires of the people.

The second concern is that initiatives and referenda would divide and polarize a nation. This is true for highly emotional issues under any system of government. Media campaigns are the norm in Canadian politics today. Hate and scare tactics are very much a part of the political fabric; these issues will not be a result of applying initiatives or referenda to the political playing field. They are issues that occur independently and in spite of initiatives and referenda. One could rather argue that they are products of the system of representative democracy, in that emotional issues, scare tactics etc. are often used by representatives to achieve an edge in a political race. If the incentive, the prize of office, were removed, it is conceivable that the issues will not escalate into the frenzied affairs we have become accustomed to seeing. Ultimately, "legislative sins of omission are correctable by the successful employment of the initiative" (Zimmerman 1986, 95).

The third concern, the potential for minority rights to be infringed by the actions of an insensitive majority. One of the greatest oppositions to the application of direct democracy comes from the fear that minority rights will not be protected under a system that seeks majority approval on issues. Howard Pawley, former premier of Manitoba, worries that a majority will not have the capacity to act prudently, where a representative would have the power to make a decision however unpopular it would be with the majority (personal conversation). Dahl's argument addresses this concern:

The making of a government decision is not a majestic march of great majorities united upon certain matters of basic policy. It is the steady appeasement of a relatively small groups. Even when these groups add up to a numerical majority at election time it is usually not useful to construe that majority as anything more than an arithmetic expression (Dahl 1956, 146).

Dahl believes that a majority is momentary and issue based. He sees no permanent threat or systematic disenfranchisement of minorities. Dahl's observation also makes clear the notion that minorities are created on every decision. The best way to combat this problem is to educate people on the virtues of difference and tolerance. The protection offered to minority rights by parliament are the result of an educated group deliberating on issues and coming to conclusions. A sophisticated society with a highly educated population will stand the best chance of combating the occurrences of indiscretions that specifically target minorities. Blais and Gidengil confronted the issue of majority rule versus minority rights.

We asked them to decide which factor is more important in a democratic society: letting the majority decide or protecting the needs and rights of minorities. ... Eleven percent of our respondents insisted that both are equally important. Those that did make a choice were fairly evenly divided: 52 percent opted for letting the majority decide, while 48 percent gave priority to protecting the needs and rights of minorities (Blais & Gidengil 1991, 18).

The findings of Blais and Gidengil, when contrasted to the increase in levels and numbers of educated Canadians, signals hope for a citizen governed system to protect the rights of the members of society. There is a fear that crafty wording would disguise legislation that would infringe the rights of minorities. Equally skilled orators would provide a level playing field. This does not provide a guarantee that minority rights would not be infringed under direct democracy. There is also no guarantee that minority rights will be protected under a representative system.

In fact, the history of protecting minority rights in Canada has been sporadic and driven by the desire for advancing the position of a particular party or government. For example Canadian women earned the right to vote only after the Conservative party of the day (1942), holding to the notion that women were conservative by nature, sought to improve the odds at the polls in their favour. The point is representative democracy does

not necessarily provide greater protection to the rights of minorities. Often times representatives will act in the interest of a minority while having a hidden agenda. Such was the case when women initially got the vote.

There was a lot of opposition to conscription, and the government feared defeat in the election that was being held on the issue. In order to ensure as much support as possible, Borden's recently formed Union government, made up of Conservatives and Liberals who favored conscription, passed the Wartime Elections Act. This act gave the vote to women who were British subjects and who had a close relative in the armed forces. It was expected that these women would naturally be in favor of conscripting other men to support their husbands, sons and brothers who were already fighting. And in deed they were. The election was a clear victory for the Union government (Ray 1981, 50).

In actuality, the representative system is guilty of permitting the opposite, a minority to dictate to a majority. This would be equally oppressive if not more oppressive. Such is evident in any of the many instances of governments allowing corporate entities to dictate policy at the expense of the people. It is inevitable that governments will error. The scale and magnitude of the error is no greater under either system of democracy. One thing that can be said is that a system that allows the people to error and correct their errors for themselves would be more acceptable than one in which they are subject to the errors of others.

The fourth concern, notes the possibility for heavily financed vested interest to capture public opinion. Again, this is product of representative democracy. This problem is actually a greater threat to representative democracy than it is to direct democracy. It is much easier for well-financed interest groups to exert direct influence over a smaller number of people, such as a representative body. The concern expressed is that a heavily financed media blitz by a special interest group employing sophisticated marketing techniques would sell the issue to the unsophisticated citizenry. That position can be addressed by employing, as is done in British Columbia, measures that will limit

the influence of capital. British Columbia limits the amounts of money that can be spent on an initiative. There are also restrictions on who may contribute (<http://www.elections.bc.ca>). Many sections of the recall and initiative act make specific references to limits in spending regarding initiatives and recall. The limitations are as follows:

72 (1) Subject to section 93, an individual or organization other than an authorized participant must not incur initiative vote expenses.

73 (1) (a) the proponent must not incur vote expense if incurring the expense will result in the initiative vote expense of the proponent exceeding the expense limit under section 74 (2) (a)

74 (1) The value of the initiative vote expense incurred by all proponents or all the opponents of the initiative vote during an initiative vote period must not exceed the limits calculated by multiplying (a) the applicable amount under section 198 (1) (a) of the Elections Act, and (b) the number of registered voters for all electoral districts in British Columbia at the start of the initiative period.

74 (2) (a) if proponent of the initiative petition is the proponent of the initiative vote under section 61 the expense limit for that proponent is (i) 50% of the limit calculated under subsection (1) if there are other proponents for the initiative vote or (ii) 100% of the limit calculated under subsection (1) if there are no other proponents

79 (1) Unless the relief is granted by a court under section 80, the following penalties apply if an authorized participant exceeds the applicable expense limit: (a) in the case of an expense limit for a proponent or proponent group, (i) the initiative vote fails, and (ii) the proponent must pay, or proponent who are members of the proponent group are jointly and separately liable to pay the chief electoral officer a penalty of double the amount by which the expense exceeds the limit; (b) if the total initiative vote expense of an opponent group exceeds the expenses limit for that opponent group, the members of the opponent group are jointly and separately liable to pay the chief electoral officer a penalty of 10 times the amount by which the expense exceed the limit. (http://www.elections.bc.ca/init/I_pro.html).

There are limits on the amount that can be spent in advertising, contravention of which carries penalties similar to that for contraventions of limits referred to in section 79 (1) above. Strict spending limits are enforced, contravention of which results in the dismissal of the initiative.

The fifth concern is the limitation of prudent compromise seemingly offered by both initiatives and referenda. Having the tools to propose amendments to a piece of

legislation ensures that all would be modifiable after the process. Further, the process itself could be made to permit modification. Though the process as it currently exists in British Columbia does not. The measures do not allow a second proposition to be launched on the same issue before the process is completed for the proposal being considered (http://www.elections.bc.ca/init/i_pro.html). The process could be modified along these lines. Opposition to a proposal could be permitted to state their opposition to amending the proposed document, They would then be permitted to offer a counter proposal. Both or several proposals would then be put to the vote allowing the electorate to choose any or none of the offers. There would have to be a limit set on the time allowed for amended proposals to be rendered for consideration. This also serves to address the rigid yes/no problematic noted by Cronin. In these instances, people would have options well beyond the yes or no vote. In an observation by Derek DeCloset, initiatives and referenda are praised for an increase in the voter turnout.

The most noticeable change has been in voter's attitudes. After the bylaw was implemented, the voter's list grew by 10%. People who had never participated in elections began voting while others began studying the petitions they are asked to sign. (DeCloset 1997, 11).

Zimmerman presents similar concerns regarding both initiatives and referenda:

Although the referendum on ordinary statutes is designed to be a compliment to and not a replacement of law making by elected public representatives, the circulation of petitions and increased use of the referendum reflect a loss of voter confidence in elected representatives and an erosion of their position and importance. On the other hand, the availability of the protest referendum arms the citizens with a device for remedying what they perceive to be poor judgmental decisions by legislative bodies (Zimmerman 1986, 59)

We conclude that the initiative generally has been a salutary adaptation of the legislative process, which has educated citizens with respect to important public policy issues. ...Critics notwithstanding, the general electorate has been discriminating in examining the pro and con arguments for an initiated proposition prior to deciding upon how to vote. Experience with initiative and referendum supports the Aristotelian concept of the collective wisdom of

the voters. Furthermore, voters have not been enthralled with the rhetoric of ideologies on the "right" or the "left."

On balance, the indirect initiative strengthens the governance system. ... Furthermore, the availability of the initiative increases the citizen's stake in the government (Zimmerman 1986, 96-97).

As tools of direct democracy, initiatives and referenda enhances the potential for citizens to play a greater role in the politics of the nation. As citizens become more comfortable with the power they possess and adjust to their new role as governors and governed, the chains of representative democracy will be released.

As a tool for direct democracy, recall is only applicable in representative democracy. Recall plays a very specific role; it serves, as a deterrent to would be dishonest politicians. As a result, recall is the least popular of the tools of direct democracy. The concerns regarding the use of recall are similar to those for both initiative and referendum. Critics talk about recall undermining the powers of the elected representatives. In addition to the Cronin's argument against recall presented in Chapter Two, Zimmerman offers:

- 1) The use of recall for ideological reasons is undesirable.
- 2) Frivolous recall petitions can be circulated to harass conscientious public officers and possibly discourage them from seeking re-election to office.
- 3) The recall may be abused by well-organized and well-financed organizations to achieve their special interest (Zimmerman 1986, 126).

The concerns regarding recall are echoed throughout Canada. The halls of academia as well as the political chambers reverberate with very strong opposition to its implementation and application. As stated, to date only British Columbia has provisions in place that permit recall. Recall, obviously has no place in a citizen governed society, therefore all references will be to its use in the transitional phase from representative to direct democracy.

Recall serves the sole purpose of keeping elected officials accountable to their constituents between elections. The possibilities exist that it could be manipulated by crafty individuals. But, as we defend a judicial system that sometimes prosecutes the innocent, so too we must endorse a system that for the greater good of the political process may have an innocent casualty. That being said, let us address directly the concerns surrounding recall.

Cronin's concerns expressed in Chapter Two as well as Zimmerman's concerns expressed above will be addressed here. Cronin's concern refers to what he calls the antagonistic nature of recall. This is a correct observation. Recall is very adversarial in its approach to remedying a problem. It attacks the problem at the root; however, recall does not seek by design to remove good lawmakers. Recall enables the people to correct a mistake before the problem has a chance to get worse. It is the norm to dismiss an employee if they have contravened the rules of the company that employs them. Quite simply, recall operates under the same principles, allowing citizens, the employer, to fire the representative, the employee. Attempts to employ recall in British Columbia have been controversial. Of the eleven attempts to employ recall, only one resulted in MLA leaving office. MLA Paul Reitsma resigned after a petition was filed against him. Reitsma having admitted to several acts unbecoming a representative refused to resign. The petition was filed by a gas station night supervisor (Wood & Reitsma 1998).

A very loud opposition to the use of recall comes, not surprisingly, from the New Democratic Party (NDP). The target in eight of eleven recalls attempted in British Columbia. The NDP are crying foul.

Critics complained loudly that the law only allowed disgruntled partisans to re-fight the last election. ... Even Premier Glen Clark voiced concerns that the law – approved in the principle by 81 percent of voters in a 1991 referendum,

and widely supported in current pools – was being abused by individuals trying to use it in a political way that was never intended (Wood & Reitsma 1997, 28).

The precarious position of the NDP government lead to speculations, on their part, that recall petitions were an organized attempt to bring down the government. Support for the recall was being sought based on several different localized issues and one main issue of a clear act of deception on the part of the party.

The NDP government claim prior to the May 1996 election that it had balanced that year's budget, and would deliver an \$87-million surplus in the 1996-97. The two budgets ended up with a combined deficit of \$742 million (Cunningham 1997, 28).

The fact is that the petitions may have been organized by special interests, but ultimately the people have to decide. In the case of the NDP, all the petitions failed. Citizens did not believe that the deceptive claims by the party were reason enough to remove the MLA's from office. The question is, will it make British Columbia MLA's more responsible? If it has, then the attempts were successful.

The second concern is that recall makes public office less attractive to able individuals. There is no evidence of this. In fact, one could just as easily contend that recall by virtue of the fact that it deters dishonesty will foster respectability and faith in politicians. This could serve to attract more able people to get involved in politics. The third concern is that recall is disruptive, divisive, polarizing and is subject to intentional and unintentional abuse. Recall is no more disruptive, divisive or polarizing than elections.

Adversarial campaigning, a norm in today's election campaigns, is far more polarizing and divisive than any recall attempt could ever be. The potential for abuse has been just that, a potential. There is no documentation of abuse of the recall process. NDP claims of abuse of recall are that the recall attempts in British Columbia upset the

flow of the government and that they were unfairly targeted. However, this is the desired effect of recall. It is hoped that placing a MLA or group of MLAs on the hot seat will foster integrity among MLAs. As for the NDP's claims of being unfairly targeted, it is more likely that MLAs who are targeted will be members of the government because they are ones with greatest influence over policies of the day.

The forth concern labels recall as confusing, unfair and burdensome, due to the need of citizens to keep informed. This concern as it is expressed, serves only to insult the abilities of the electorate. Recall is no more confusing than an election. Usually the issue over which the representative is being recalled is well publicised. A recall petition will have far less issues to consider than those surrounding an election. Today's voters are by far better informed than the citizens of the past were. As discussed by Downs in Chapter Two, the opportunity cost of being informed is much less today, thereby allowing the citizen to take on the additional demand that recall would place upon them.

The fifth concern expressed by Cronin refers to the cost, necessity and target of recall. The cost of recalling an official is measured against the cost of permitting him/her to continue to misrepresent. The cost of misrepresentation may be far greater than any cost incurred to be rid of it. The complaint about cost is also misplaced because in Canada's history only one by-election, (to replace Paul Reitsma who as mentioned earlier resigned after a petition was launched against him) has been called as a result of recall, while several have been called as a result of death, resignations etc. The notion that recall is unnecessary or is aimed at the wrong target is unfounded. Recall is not only necessary but also vital to the life of democracy. Advances in communications technology have enabled us to see that our politicians need closer monitoring, and recall

is the tool that will allow us to remove those that betray the trust of the people they are elected to serve. As for recall being aimed against the wrong target, if the wrong official is targeted the process will likely vindicate him or her.

Zimmerman expresses much the same concerns with three additions. He sees the use of recall for ideological reasons as being undesirable. Ideology is the very foundation of the political process. Parties have always run on ideological platforms, ideology is a very important part of political identity. How then can Zimmerman negate the importance of ideology when considering removing an official from office? A betrayal of trust is such whether it is ideological or substantive. In fact, the ideological betrayal will often be the precursor to a substantive betrayal. For example, a person who is elected under a particular party banner may be recalled if he or she changes parties after winning the election. The change in party may be an indication of an ideological shift that changes the way the constituents needs will be met.

Zimmerman's second concern examines the notion that frivolous petitions, designed to harass representatives, will be circulated. It is not very likely that petitions designed to harass will do damage to the reputation of an honest representative. In Canada, it has been very difficult to generate support for a legitimate recall attempt, let alone a frivolous one. A frivolous petition will be little more than a nuisance.

The third concern looks at the susceptibility of the recall process to manipulation by deep-pocketed, well-organized groups. The process of recall is immunized against deep pockets through a structured spending limit. A penalty of dismissal is levied against all petitions that exceed set spending limit. The spending limit makes the process accessible to people with limited resources while at the same time removing the

advantage to be had from having huge financial resources, effectively levelling the playing field. The British Columbia rules regarding spending limits are:

123 (2) in the case of an electoral district for which there 25 000 are fewer registered voters, the total value of recall expenses incurred by an authorised participant during a recall petition period must not exceed the application amount under subsection (6) (a) or (7).

(3) In the case of an electoral district for which there are more than 25 000 registered voters, the total value of recall expenses incurred by an authorised participant during the recall petition period must not exceed the total of (a) the amount permitted by subsection (2), and (b) the applicable amount under subsection (6) (b) or (7) for each registered voter for the electoral district in excess of 25 000.

(4) Subject to subsection (5), if an electoral district has an average of fewer than 2 registered voters for each square kilometre, the limit on recall expenses under subsection (2) or (3) as applicable, is increased by the amount calculated by multiplying (a) the applicable amount under subsection (6) (c) or (7), and (b) the total number of square kilometres in the electoral district.

(5) The maximum increase in the limit on recall expenses under subsection (4) is 25% of the limit determined under subsection (2) or (3), as applicable.

(6) For a recall petition that is issued during the period beginning on February 24, 1995 and ending on December 31, 1995, the following are to be used as the amounts for determining the limits on recall expenses: (a) under subsection (2), \$25 000; (b) under subsection (3), \$0.25; (c) under subsection (4), \$0.15.

(7) For each recall petition period that begins on or after January 1, 1996, the chief electoral officer must adjust the amounts under subsection (6) and, for these purposes, section 204 (2) and (4) of the Election Act applies.

(8) The chief electoral must (a) have notice of an adjusted amount under subsection (7) published in the gazette and (b) give notice of the amount to the authorized participants (<http://www.elections.bc.ca/rcl/recall.html>)

Recall, having been employed only in British Columbia, and for such a short time, does not offer a wealth of information from which to determine how effective its use will be. Since its implementation in 1995, there have been eleven attempts to recall representatives. In all but one of the cases, the petitions failed, for either lack of support or withdrawal of the petition all together. The lack of support for the petitions may indicate that people are not yet accustomed to the power they have in the recall process. It may also indicate that the people were happy with their MLAs

Recall has received mixed reviews in British Columbia. Members of the conventional political community are mostly unimpressed with the process. Ruff notes

that the NDP was reluctant to implement Bill 36, the Recall and Referendum Act. Ruff notes:

It also stems from fears typical of most legislatures when faced with the prospect of either weakened control of the political agenda or less job security. The result is evident the Recall and Initiative Act's highly constrained compromise (Ruff 1996, 99).

To the credit of the NDP, though they effectively made the process weighted in favour of the representative, they showed some faith in implementing a system that the party had inherited as legislation from an outgoing party. Often times an incoming party would disregard unfinished business by an outgoing party. Vocal criticism is delivered by Varzeliotis and Varzeliotis. While condemning the NDP for watering down the original ballot question, Varzeliotis and Varzeliotis express little hope for the strengthening of the process through normal political lines:

Elected tyranny is highly resistant to elections, having survived countless ones in the past. Indeed, elected tyrants draw from them – there is no stronger shield for tyranny than the “elected” adjective. While the next general election presents an opportunity for action, the prospects of wrangling an honest recall and initiative law from it are meagre at best. Yet, we must endeavour to raise the issue and to keep it in the prominent place it deserves during the entire campaign (Varzeliotis & Varzeliotis 1996, 225).

Initiatives in British Columbia have suffered the same fate. Since its implementation in 1995, there have been five petition applications made with the fifth still in process.

The petition, entitled the Initiative to Establish the Child Services Equality Act, will be issued to the proponent for signature collection on May 23, 2000. Proponents will have 90 days to collect the signatures of at least 10 per cent of voters in each electoral district who were registered on or before the day, the petition is issued (http://www.elections.bc.ca/newsrel/n_000323.html).

Of the four initiative petitions that ran their course two were not returned on time and one was returned without the required signatures, and as a result they failed. The fourth was withdrawn. Again, the possibilities are that people may be satisfied or are not yet

accustomed with the process and the power they possess. The nature of the proposed initiatives is a point that should also be examined. The most recent initiative petition titled The Initiative to Establish Childs Services equity Act, seeks to:

The purpose of the initiative draft Bill is to establish a process which would replace waiting lists for social and health care services and programs for children with a 30-day processing period of applications for such services or programs. The ministry responsible for the provision of the service or program applied for would have 30 days to screen the application and deliver the service or program. The Bill establishes an appeal period if applications are rejected. The Bill would establish an early intervention fund to be administered by the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate in conjunction with several ministries. The fund would be separate from the budgets used to provide social or health-care services and programs, and would provide for services as designated by the Child, Youth and Family Advocate (http://www.elections.bc.ca/newsrel/n_000323.html).

The other petitions were titled

Petition I95001 - An Act to Balance the Budget and Retire Provincial Debt (Nov. 20, 1995)

Petition I95002 - An Act to Remove School Tax Levies from Residential Properties (Dec. 11, 1995)

Petition I95003 - An Act Regarding Pensions for Members of the Legislative Assembly (Not issued)

Petition I96001 - An Act to Prohibit the Hunting of Bears (Sept. 9, 1996)

Critics will be quick to point out that citizens are not ready for the responsibility of creating legislation. One could counter with the claim that given the opportunity citizens will soon learn to use these powers to express their political will. The important factor is that citizens not accustomed to having the powers accorded them by initiative and recall are willing to assume the challenges, errors and all, and are by that virtue gaining more knowledge of the process with every attempt.

Referenda have all together a different history than initiatives and recalls. Firstly, referenda have been employed at the national level as well as at the provincial levels. Referenda have been used only three times by the federal government in Canada. A correct definition will actually have these three attempts labelled as plebiscites.

Plebiscites were defined earlier in this work as government sponsored questions that solicit a collective decision of the citizens. The response of the citizens is non-binding on the government. Boyer argues:

Canada's political establishment has long displayed a dismissive and rather dull opposition to "letting the people decide" on constitutional arrangements or other questions of transcending national importance (Boyer 1992, 9).

Instead of genuine consultation of the people, governments have used referenda when they were unsure what decision would keep them in good stead politically. This was the case for the 1898 referendum on prohibition of liquor. This was a politically charged debate "it was a sure-fire guarantor of controversy Alcohol was disparagingly dubbed "demon rum" by some people because of the social evils, health problems, and personal calamities it produced. To others it meant pleasure. To still others, it spelt profit" (Boyer 1992, 16). The 1942 referendum that considered releasing the government from its 1940 promise of no conscription for overseas military service, was a request on the part of the government to break an election promise.

The Liberal government of Prime Minister Mackenzie King won re-election in this wartime campaign, in part on its pledge of "no conscription for overseas military service."... The government wanted free of the restrictions by which it was raising the overseas armed forces, but its pledge, so recently endorsed by the 1940 electoral mandate," was not to force men into military service and send them over seas to battle. ... Eventually the Prime Minister and his Cabinet agreed that a plebiscite would help extricate them from at least part of their dilemma (Boyer 1992, 36).

The King government was handily freed, with 63.7 percent approval of the 71.3 percent that turned out, from its election promise. The gesture, to consult, on the part of the King government, depicts an honour that is sorely missed. In Canadian politics today, election promises are broken without so much as an apology.

The most recent national referendum, the 1992 Charlottetown Accord, offered Canadians a banquet of issues to consider. The 71.8 percent turnout rate of the Accord,

had a slight margin over the 71.3 percent of the 1942 referendum and a substantial margin over the 44.6 percent of the 1898 referendum. Billed as the constitutional package with something for everyone, the Charlottetown Accord aimed to redress all the perceived shortcomings of the Constitution in one fell swoop. The Charlottetown Accord was defeated with the yes side receiving 45.6 percent of the vote. More important to this paper than why the accord failed is the question of voter competence. According to Malcolmson and Myers, "the 'something-for-everybody' approach turned out to be a 'something-to-offend-everybody' approach"(Malcolmson & Myers 1996, 53). Were Canadians ready to take on the task of constitutional amendments? If voter turnout is an indication, then they were ready. Experts may argue that Canadians were not ready and citizens generally will never be ready for the tasks placed before them in a referendum.

The Charlottetown Accord had one very promising prospect for the future of direct democracy in Canada. Malcolmson and Myers observe:

Ottawa's recourse to a referendum leaves us with an interesting constitutional question: do proposed amendments to the constitution now have to be submitted to the people for a popular vote of approval? If we look at the relevant constitutional law, Part V of CA 1982, in which there is no mention of the term "referendum," the answer appears to be no. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that Canadian voters would not insist on the right to have a direct voice in future decisions about the Constitution now that they have had that opportunity in the Charlottetown process. If this is so then perhaps we are witnessing an emergence of a new constitutional convention (Malcolmson & Myers 1996, 53).

Malcolmson and Myers are identifying the possible birth of a new convention that would see Canadians having a direct voice in the passage of any amendments to the highest laws of the land. The Accord is to be applauded for the precedent it sets. It will be a very brave or foolish government that seeks to make amendments to the constitution, without the input of Canadian citizens. Hopefully it will no be long before the tools, initiatives

and recall, available exclusively to British Columbia, join referendum as an option for governance throughout Canada and at the federal level.

The tools of direct democracy are available in Switzerland, where they practice what is referred to as semi-direct democracy. Swiss citizens exercise their right to participate in the process of law making. The Swiss have practiced their democracy for centuries. Howard Penniman identifies the origins as the result of an alliance among three Cantons almost eight centuries ago (Penniman 1983). The Swiss system of government, while incorporating the tools of direct democracy, referenda, initiatives and recall, practices representative democracy. Referenda and initiatives are employed quite frequently as noted in the previous chapter. Switzerland has held to date almost twice as many referenda as all other democracies combined. Recall on the other hand has been rare (Cronin 1989).

The Swiss employ a system of proportional representation. Proportional representation is a system that approximates a direct correlation between vote shares and seat allocations. This ensures that minor parties gain fair representation (Jackson & Jackson 2000). H. MacIvor, advocate of the PR system, has argued that Canada in an attempt to become more representative, should adopt this system of selecting representatives. Based on his concerns about the SMP, Hurst would likely endorse H. MacIvor's position.

Many theorists, such as Blais and Dobrzynska (1998) and Powell (1980) among others, who have examined direct democracy have excluded Switzerland when studying political participation, referring to it as a dummy statistic. "We also have a dummy for Switzerland, a clearly deviant case that has been treated as such in all previous studies"

(Blais & Dobrzynska 1998, 243). Switzerland has been left out because while it meets the conditions set out for high participation, the Swiss have alarmingly low rates of voter turnout. In five elections between 1972 and 1995, the Swiss have failed to achieve a 50 percent turnout. In fact, election turnout rate seems to be falling, from 48.9 percent in 1983 to 42.3 percent in 1995 (Blais & Dobrzynska 1998).

Citizen participation in Switzerland presents a definite problem for all would be advocates of direct democracy. While displaying all the signifiers associated with a high degree of citizen participation, Switzerland ranks at the very bottom in actual participation among stable democracies. The one explanation that can be offered is that Swiss citizens have the highest rate of citizen satisfaction with the performance of their government, at the last count it stood at 72 percent (Butler & Ranney 1994). A future study could check for a correlation between citizen satisfaction and citizen participation. The very nature of the system may also contribute to the low voter turnout, which should be noted, does not alarm the Swiss as a similar turnout would alarm Canadians.

Unlike in Canada, elections in Switzerland are relatively uneventful. The scandal of the 2000 leadership selection for the Alliance Party in Canada saw the staff of candidate Tom Long purchase unsolicited party membership in the names of people without their permission, and who in many instances were not even aware of the new party's existence (Laghi & MacKinnon 2000, A3). This and other political indiscretions, commonplace in North America are largely foreign to Swiss political culture. Penniman sums it up in a review of the 1979 general elections:

The elections of October 1979 had so much potential impact on Swiss political life that one was led to expect at least a little excitement. At stake were all of the 200 seats in the lower house of the Swiss legislature and most of the 46 seats in the upper house. ... The composure of the Swiss was undisturbed by national elections. The brouhaha and ballyhoo usually connected with

elections in the United States were nonexistent. ... The National television network was never dominated by election programming, even during the week before the elections were scheduled to take place. ... Similarly, the Swiss did not become the victims of the drama and passion that seem to almost always accompany elections in neighbouring countries such as Italy and France [and, sometimes, the Federal Republic of Germany]. ... The Swiss did not expect the election to bring about any fundamental Change in national policy (Penniman 1983, 1).

Implied in the quote is the notion that there are little differences in national policy regardless of the party in power. This may provide a disincentive for the voter turnout. This has been the primary concern of theorist like Blais that have considered application of direct democracy. The point that should be noted is that apathy has not crippled the Swiss system of semi-direct democracy; this point warrants a much more detailed study. In the interim Canadians should not be discouraged by the apathy displayed of apathy but instead should be encouraged by the legacy of the system.

Chapter Four Conclusion

The June 2000 scandal surrounding the leadership selection in the Alliance Party serves to re-enforce the notions that the Canadian representative system is not delivering on its promise to represent. The respect for the electorate that Mackenzie King displayed when he found that his government was unable to keep an election promise is a quality that is lost among today's political elite. Countless scandals involving members of both the federal and provincial parliaments have all but extinguished citizen confidence in the political structure. Members of parliament once thought to serve the interest of citizens are now seen to represent themselves and big business. As a result, questions have been raised on the extent to which Canadian democracy is democratic.

Chapter Two includes a review of Hurst's arguments depicting the undemocratic features of the parliamentary system that are fundamental to the representative system generally and the parliamentary system specifically. Hurst's arguments lend credence to a conclusion that at best, the Canadian parliamentary representative system does not represent adequately, and, worse it is undemocratic. As we saw, representative democracy as it has existed in Canada and else where, despite the faults noted by Hurst, offered the best option for mass participation. Increasingly however people are becoming dissatisfied with the Canadian representative system.

As indicated in the preceding chapters, the business of government, instead of serving the nation, is that of being re-elected. Once elected, the power held by majority governments makes them virtual dictatorships, which are able to push through legislation. The convention of party discipline can transform party leaders into kings of the court

with the power to knight members of parliament with choice portfolio or banish dissenters to the backbenches.

Increasingly Canadians are questioning the legitimacy of the representative system. Chapter Three included MacDonald identification of what he refers to as a new wave of populist movements dissatisfied with politicians and the political process. Technology, in the form of media has opened the eyes of more Canadians to the shortcomings of the representative system of government. Ironically, it is communications technology along with education, as argued by Laudon and Masuda, which will provide Canadians with the means and ability to restore the citizen's right to meaningful participation in their political destiny.

The main questions tackled by this work are as follows: does the potential for direct democracy increase with a proportional increase, first, in the level of education of the citizens; second, in the availability of specific forms of communications technology. This raised question asked: What, if any, difference would direct democracy make to the levels of participation in Canadian politics? The evidence indicated that generally, education provided Canadians with the skills necessary to make a meaningful contribution to the political process. As Blais and Gidengil discovered, when all other variables are held constant education increases political participation. Canadians are being educated in greater numbers and are earning higher levels of education. Education of the masses has had the effect of eliminating the general knowledge gap between the representative and the represented.

As the evidence has indicated, Canadians are better educated and are more willing to extend themselves to the process of self-governance. The apparent decline in voter

turnout, often attributed to low levels of knowledge among the citizenry, as argued by Nevitte and Laudon, is now being attributed to disenchantment and disillusionment of the electorate. Educated citizens eager to participate in the political process are blocked by the limitations presented by the system of representative democracy. The result is a decline in the traditional form of political participation, increasingly citizens look to other avenues to express their political will. The explosion in voluntary organizations in the last twelve years is an indication that Canadians are interested in their social and political well-being. Therefore, while education has contributed to the current wave off voter apathy, there is some evidence to indicate that a greater degree of education increases the potential for direct democracy.

Looking to the evidence of whether or not the increase in certain forms of communications technology enhances the potential for a greater degree of direct democracy. It indicates that communications technology has always had an impact on the political process. Communications technology, specifically print, enabled politics to be brought to the masses. Every technological development in communication since the advent of the newspaper has impacted the political process.

The internet, the newest form of communications, is being touted to have the biggest impact yet. The fact that the internet embodies all forms of media and communications technology that preceded it gives credibility to the notion that it has the ability to deliver on the promises to revolutionise the political process. Communication technology contributes to the political process in several areas. It reduces the opportunity cost of acquiring information. For example, people can now have news designed to their interest delivered directly to their email. Television originally reduced the opportunity

cost of acquiring information for the citizens. It delivers in minutes, highlights on news items, and offers more pictures than books and newspapers or books that would have taken hours to read. Website commentaries provide alternative opinions that direct the thought and deliberation on issues. The infinite space of the World Wide Web removes the limit on the amount of information to which citizens have access. The falling price of the technology ensures that accessibility to the internet will grow well beyond the 50 percent of Canadian households already online.

By far the greatest application of communications technology to the process of direct democracy is the fact that it allows citizens to be consulted easily and repeatedly for their views on any issue. In other words, communications makes it possible for direct democracy to be achieved. It has applications for whatever extent of direct democracy is desired by the people. Communications technology will be able to facilitate full-blown direct democracy in which the citizens would participate in all the decisions of the state, or a hybrid thereof, where the citizens would participate in decisions on some specific issues, such as constitutional amendments.

The problems associated with the use of the new technology are primarily those that can be associated with all new developments. First, the ability of the people to use the technology effectively and efficiently is a concern that will be overcome within a generation. The fact that over 90 percent of Canada's K-12 educational institutions are wired to the web means that problems associated with basic use of the technology will disappear in time. The major concerns about the use of technology lay in the area of security. The web presents a security risk that has not faced the political process before. One concern expressed by those opposed to the use of technology in the voting process is

the potential for those with access or the ability to gain access to reverse the outcome of an election, etc. This problem can be addressed with the safeguard of duplication. Technology allows duplication of the results, and for it to be stored at different locations, with different people having authorized access. This reduces the risk to the levels that are present with the current ballot system. Even with the risks, the internet offers the potential for Canadians everywhere to be informed and to offer an informed preference in a relatively short time. It is evident that the potential for a greater degree of direct democracy exists because of the availability of advance communications technology.

The issues of voter apathy that has plagued representative democracy have the potential to cripple direct democracy. A system that relies solely on the participation of the people would suffer for lack of that participation. As a secondary issue, this work examined what if any impact direct democracy would have on the levels of participation. The findings are inconclusive. However, there are strong indications that participation will depend on level of education. The increase in levels and numbers of Canadians pursuing higher education corresponded with an increase in the numbers of voluntary associations during the same period. While voter apathy is on the rise, citizen participation in non-governmental organizations is actually on the increase. Citizens seem to be veering toward involvement institutions that offer the opportunity to play a more significant role. The fact that the Charlottetown Accord (1992) saw levels of participation well above the participation levels of the subsequent general elections of 1993 and 1997 further indicated citizen contempt toward the conventional political structure. The Charlottetown Accord offered a welcome opportunity for meaningful participation. The outcome of the Charlottetown Accord, wrong or right, expressed the

will of the people. Ultimately the people themselves have the most to gain or lose on policy decisions. It is for that reason, if conditions allow, that citizens should be allowed to participate directly in policy decisions.

The decline in voter turnout in regular elections is an indication that people are disillusioned by the political process. The rapid increase in the number of voluntary associations indicates a willingness to participate in areas that allow for significant contributions. Though not enough to say conclusively, there is an apparent correlation between the decline in voter turnout and the increase in voluntary agencies. Determining this correlation could be the subject of further studies.

Switzerland employs direct democracy, and yet has a low participation rate. This has been used to argue that direct democracy worsens the participation rate. It should be also noted that lack of participation in a 'semi-direct' democracy has not crippled it. The use of recall is almost nonexistent. Most important, the Swiss electorate, comfortably in control highly approve of their employees, the government. Direct democracy does not guarantee high levels of participation at all times and on all issues. What is guaranteed is that people have the ability to participate on any issue. Participation in excess of fifty percent will invariably be superior to the levels of participation exhibited in a representative system. People may choose not to participate, however, it is likely that those who withdraw from the process would not have participated in a representative system either. While on the other hand some number of those who do participate would not have participated because of the institutionalised limitations of representative democracy. Therefore, with Canada's participation in federal elections at 67 percent, the

adaptation of direct democracy would increase this offering. Having better than 67 percent of the people decide on policy is more acceptable than having representatives decide; representatives, as indicated by election results typically represent, at best, 40 percent of the people.

The experience with initiatives and recall in British Columbia gives hope for the future of direct democracy. While the citizens have only limited experience with initiatives and recall, they have employed them. Their willingness to use the tools of direct democracy allowed in British Columbia indicates that Canadians are ready to assume a role in their governance. Further, the tools give British Columbians a measure of control over members of their provincial legislature. This is a safeguard against would-be corrupt or timid legislators. Initiatives allow citizens to tackle corporate interests that would otherwise overwhelm representatives. Initiatives give citizens the power to directly influence the laws under which they are governed. Finally, initiatives ensure that citizens can no longer be left out of the political process, the power to amend a law guarantees this.

The future of Canadian democracy is unfolding. Legislation has been passed that will allow the electoral process to be conducted via the web. Security measures developed to combat fraud in the electoral process of a representative system will be employable in a system of direct democracy. In British Columbia the transformation has begun, provincial legislation is no worse for wear and the involvement of citizens in the process is encouraging. Canada is not ready at this time for a full-blown version of direct democracy. However, it is time for the nation to follow the lead of British Columbia and implement measures that will foster a greater degree of direct democracy. Theorists have

consistently stated, conditions for consultations permitting, direct democracy is the most desirable form of government.

Conditions in Canada permit such a move. Citizens are asking for such a move. In British Columbia such a move has been made, and has been supported by the people. Levels of education and communications technology permit such a move. It is time for change. Bring a greater degree of direct democracy to the rest of Canada.

It will be left to future studies to assess the period in which Canada should exact the changes in the system. The issue on who drafts the questions to be posed in a referendum is also left to a future study. Further studies are required, as well to determine what the issues should be put to a general vote. A future study could also determine what if any correlations exist between citizen satisfaction and citizen participation.

The purpose of this study was merely to determine whether increase educational levels and advances in communication technology can allow Canada to move closer to the ideals of direct democracy. It has been shown that they do. The task of reshaping the institutions will be left to others. It is however, evident from the arguments examined that Canada can benefit from a system that incorporates proportional representation simultaneously with the adaptation of referenda, initiatives and recall.

Appendix A

Listing of National and Provincial Referenda

Electoral Jurisdiction	Date	Issue
Canada	September 29 th 1898	Prohibition of liquor
	April 27 th 1942	Releasing government from Conscription promise
	October 26 th 1992	Charlottetown Accord constitutional amendments
British Columbia	November 25 th 1909	Policy for liquor control
	September 14 th 1916	Women's suffrage
	September 14 th 1916	Prohibition of liquor
	October 20 th 1920	Temperance
	June 20 th 1924	Beer-by-the-glass
	June 1 st 1937	Public Health Inc.
	June 12 th 1952	Daylight saving time
	June 12 th 1952	Regulating the sale of liquor
	August 30 th 1972	Daylight saving time (voting in only five districts)
	October 17 th 1991	Recall & Initiatives
Alberta	July 21 st 1915	Prohibition of liquor
	October 25 th 1920	Prohibition of liquor
	November 5 th 1923	Temperance
	August 17 th 1948	Ownership power of companies
	October 30 th 1957	Addition outlets for the sale of Liquor
	May 23 rd 1967	Daylight saving time
	August 30 th 1971	Daylight saving time
Saskatchewan	November 27 th 1913	Approval of Direct Legislation Act
	December 11 th 1969	Abolition of liquor Saskatchewan
	October 25 th 1920	Liquor imports Saskatchewan
	July 16 th 1942	Prohibition of liquor
	June 19 th 1934	Beer-by-the-glass
	October 26 th 1956	Local time zones
	October 21 st 1991	Balance budget legislation
	(three Questions)	Ratification constitutional amendments by referendum
		Government funding of Hospital abortions
Manitoba	July 25 th 1982	Prohibition of liquor
	April 12 th 1902	Prohibition of liquor
	March 13 th 1916	Temperance Act
	June 12 th 1923	Government control liquor sale
	July 11 th 1923	Amendments to Temperance Act
	July 28 th 1927	Sale of Beer (three questions)
	November 24 th 1952	Marketing course grain
	January 1 st 1894	Prohibition of liquor
Ontario	December 4 th 1902	Prohibition of liquor
	October 20 th 1919	Repeal Temperance Act & beer sale (four questions)
	April 18 th 1921	Liquor imports referendum

Quebec	April 10 th 1919	Prohibition beer and wine
	May 20 th 1920	Sovereignty Association
	October 1 st 1987	Constitution future Northern Quebec (vote only in region)
	October 26 th 1992	Charlottetown constitutional amendments (in tandem with national referendum)
Nova Scotia	March 14 th 1894	Prohibition of liquor
	October 25 th 1920	Regulation of liquor sale
	October 31 st 1929	Retention of Prohibition
	December 28 th 1878	Prohibition
Prince Edward Island	June 5 th 1901	Prohibition
	July 18 th 1929	Prohibition
	June 25 th 1940	Prohibition
	June 28 th 1948	New Temperance Act
	January 18 th 1988	Fixed-link crossing
	November 4 th 1915	Prohibition of liquor
	June 3 rd 1948	(1) Responsible Self-government (2) Join Canada or (3) Stay under commission government
Newfoundland	July 22 nd 1948	(1) Join Canada or (2) Responsible Self-government
	April 14 th 1982	Territorial division
	May 5 th 1992	Location of new boundary
	November 3 rd - 5 th 1992	Creation of Nunavut
Northwest Territories	April 14 th 1982	
	May 5 th 1992	
	November 3 rd - 5 th 1992	

Appendix B

British Columbia Recall and Initiative results

Results of recall petitions in British Columbia, provides proponent, target dates and results.

Petition number: R99001-PCT
Proponent's name: Mark Richard Francioli
Member's name: Michael Farnworth
Member's political affiliation: NDP
Issuance date: May 20, 1999
Return date: July 19, 1999
Financial report due date: August 16, 1999
Verification due date: August 30, 1999
Number of canvassers registered: 10
Status of petition: Failed

Petition number: R98001-VPG
Proponent's name: Robert David Bradley
Member's name: Gordon Campbell
Member's political affiliation: LIB
Issuance date: January 13, 1998
Return date: March 16, 1998
Financial report due date: April 13, 1998
Verification due date: April 27, 1998
Number of canvassers registered: 0
Status of petition: Failed

Petition number: R98002-PRN
Proponent's name: James Loughery
Member's name: Paul Ramsey
Member's political affiliation: NDP
Issuance date: January 16, 1998
Return date: March 17, 1998
Financial report due date: April 14, 1998
Verification due date: April 28, 1998
Number of canvassers registered: 0
Status of petition: Failed

Petition number: R98003-FTL
Proponent's name: Walter Bueckert
Member's name: Rich Coleman
Member's political affiliation: LIB
Issuance date: January 27, 1998
Return date: March 30, 1998
Financial report due date: April 27, 1998
Verification due date: May 11, 1998
Number of canvassers registered: 0
Status of petition: Failed

Petition number: R98004-CMX
Proponent's name: Robert Saint Amour
Member's name: Evelyn Gillespie
Member's political affiliation: NDP
Issuance date: February 12, 1998

Return date:	April 14, 1998
Financial report due date:	May 12, 1998
Verification due date:	May 26, 1998
Number of canvassers registered:	60
Status of petition:	Failed
Petition number:	R98006-CMX
Proponent's name:	Robert Saint Amour
Member's name:	Evelyn Gillespie
Member's political affiliation:	NDP
Issuance date:	July 28, 1998
Return date:	September 28, 1998
Financial report due date:	October 26, 1998
Verification due date:	November 9, 1998
Number of canvassers registered:	0
Status of petition:	Withdrawn July 23, 1998
Petition number:	R98005-PAR
Proponent's name:	Mark Robinson
Member's name:	Paul Reitsma
Member's political affiliation:	LIB
Issuance date:	April 15, 1998
Return date:	June 15, 1998
Financial report due date:	July 13, 1998
Verification due date:	July 27, 1998
Number of canvassers registered:	194
Status of petition:	MLA resigned on June 23, 1998
Petition number:	R98007-PRN
Proponent's name:	Bob Viergever
Member's name:	Paul Ramsey
Member's political affiliation:	NDP
Issuance date:	October 7, 1998
Return date:	December 7, 1998
Financial report due date:	January 4, 1999
Verification due date:	January 28, 1999
Number of canvassers registered:	72
Status of petition:	Withdrawn December 7, 1998
Petition number:	R97001-PRN
Proponent's name:	Pertti Harkonen
Member's name:	Paul Ramsey
Member's political affiliation:	NDP
Issuance date:	December 5, 1997
Return date:	February 3, 1998
Financial report due date:	March 3, 1998
Verification due date:	March 17, 1998
Number of canvassers registered:	191
Status of petition:	Failed
Petition number:	R97002-SKN
Proponent's name:	G. Lorne Sexton
Member's name:	Helmut Giesbrecht
Member's political affiliation:	NDP
Issuance date:	December 5, 1997
Return date:	February 3, 1998

Financial report due date: March 3, 1998
Verification due date: March 17, 1998
Number of canvassers registered: 153
Status of petition: Withdrawn February 3, 1998

Petition number: R97003-SKN
Proponent's name: John How
Member's name: Helmut Giesbrecht
Member's political affiliation: NDP
Issuance date: December 12, 1997
Return date: February 10, 1998
Financial report due date: February 18, 1998
Verification due date: March 24, 1998
Number of canvassers registered: 1
Status of petition: Withdrawn January 21, 1998

<http://www.elections.bc.ca/rcl/recall.html>

Initiative Petitions to date with information on proponents, proposition and results.

* = petition currently under consideration.

Initiative legislation came into force with the new Recall and Initiative Act, 1995. Four previous initiative petition applications have received approval in principle by the Chief Electoral Officer:

Petition I95001 - An Act to Balance the Budget and Retire Provincial Debt

Date petition issued: Nov. 20, 1995

Proponent: Thomas McArthur

Opponent(s): None registered

Outcome: The petition was not returned by the proponent by the petition deadline.

Petition I95002 - An Act to Remove School Tax Levies from Residential Properties

Proponent: Terry Milne

Date petition issued: Dec. 11, 1995

Opponent(s): None registered

Outcome: The petition was not returned by the proponent by the petition deadline.

Petition I95003 - An Act Regarding Pensions for Members of the Legislative Assembly

Proponent: Patrick D. Finnigan

Date petition issued: Not issued

Opponent(s): None registered

Outcome: The petition was withdrawn by the proponent before the date on which it was to be issued.

Petition I96001 - An Act to Prohibit the Hunting of Bears

Proponent: Paul George

Date petition issued: Sept. 9, 1996

Opponent(s): Wildlife Management Alliance

Outcome: The petition was returned with insufficient signatures.

http://www.elections.bc.ca/newsrel/n_000518.html

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